Sandwell
# CHRONICLE

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## FAMILY GET TOGETHER TO MARK MILESTONE AS LAURA HITS 100

Laura Roberts seen with her birthday cake

BLACK Country centenarian Laura Roberts celebrated her milestone birthday in style, meeting up with many long lost family members she thought she had lost contact with.

Around 150 people, including relatives from far and wide, packed in to Churchills bar in Wednesbury on Saturday to mark her notching up her 100th.

Remarkably, Laura still lives independently at home in Conway Avenue, West Bromwich, where she has resided for a decade.

She married her late husband Jack in 1942 in Moxley and together they had five children together, John, now aged 69, Pete, 68, Brian, 63, Kath, 61, and Pauline, 58.

While Laura has also become a grandmother of 10 and a great-grandmother of 17.

### Cleaner

John had served in the Army and later worked as a press operator at Rubery Owen Holdings in Darlaston before sadly passing away from a heart attack in 1974 aged 64.

After leaving school Laura had worked as a cleaner in the Forge Tavern, on Cobden Street, Wednesbury, and then later at GKN automotive company.

These days she enjoys the simpler things such as reading and doing word searches.

Daughter Pauline Wood said: "The celebration went off wonderfully. We had some relatives come we had lost contact with so that was a nice surprise.

"There were around 150 guests in all.

"She has had over a hundreds of cards as well as flowers – you can't move for them."

Laura with Jack in 1942

ELECTION

## Backing, but Labour MPs critical of early date

MPS in the region have overwhelmingly backed Theresa May's call for a snap General Election on June 8, despite some reservations about the reasons behind it.

The Prime Minister said the country would head to the polls in seven weeks to give her the mandate to provide the 'strong and stable leadership to deliver Brexit'.

Jeremy Corbyn confirmed Labour were set to vote in favour of an early election, despite the Conservatives showing leads of up to 21 points in the most recent opinion polls. The party's deputy leader West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson also backed the election, saying: "Labour has an alternative vision that will provide opportunity for all, not just the few at the top."

Other Labour MPs were highly critical of Mrs May's decision to call the election.

Labour's Warley MP John Spellar accused the Prime Minister of 'transparent political manoeuvring' by calling an early general election. "This is blatant political opportunism by Theresa May and is completely at odds with what she has been saying," he said.

### Account

"She has created excuses to call an election in an attempt to take advantage of Labour's polling figures being down. I think a lot of people will see through it and vote strictly on policy. This comes at a time when the Government needs to be held to account for the cuts they have made."

Mr Spellar added that he would be 'very confident' of holding his seat in Warley.

West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey confirmed he would be voting for the election, despite it being 'unnecessary' in political terms and unwanted by the public.

Meanwhile, Walsall North MP David Winnick said Mrs May was 'taking a gamble' as poll results did not necessarily translate to election votes.

Outside of parliament, Black Country Chamber of Commerce chief executive Corin Crane said: "Given all the announcements we've had about the need for stability and a clear focus during Brexit negotiations, this will seem like a huge risk to many businesses."

## Conman ordered to pay back thousands of pounds

# SHED FRAUDSTER AVOIDS JAIL TERM

**A FRAUDSTER who conned customers out of hundreds of pounds by promising them sheds which were never delivered has avoided prison.**

Steven Corbett advertised his Cradley Heath shed-making business on eBay and told customers he could only accept payment up front. When the sheds never arrived he made excuses, including that a relative had died, and assured them deliveries would take place. There were at least 10 victims of Corbett's scam, with individual payments as large as £2,090.

Report by Richard Guttridge

He was bombarded with phone calls and emails by disgruntled customers when the sheds never turned up. Trading standards were alerted and visited Corbett's business, Pine Sheds. A visibly relieved Corbett puffed out his cheeks as he was given a suspended jail sentence at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Tuesday.

The court heard how customers agreed to pay up front for sheds on the understanding Corbett would then call to arrange a delivery date. When one man questioned the policy, Corbett, of Tack Farm Road, Stourbridge, insisted he needed payment up front.

Another out-of-pocket customer travelled three hours from Hertfordshire to try and track Corbett down but found his unit deserted. Workers from a neighbouring business informed him several others had also tried to find him.

The majority of the payments made to Corbett ranged between £500 and £800 and in total he received £7,375 which he has now been ordered to pay back.

Mr Robert Cowley, prosecuting, said: "It quickly became apparent to this defendant that when he was taking orders and taking full payment in advance for the sheds he did so knowing he would not be able to complete the orders."

Corbett ripped off customers over a six-month period, starting in January 2015, the court was told. Mr Cowley told how the rogue trader gave 'excuse after excuse' to one buyer. He said: "He agreed a future delivery date which was again cancelled. Various excuses were given, that he was in hospital, on holiday and on one occasion he said he had a dying relative."

Corbett pleaded guilty to 10 counts of fraud by false representation and was given an eight-month prison term, suspended for 18 months. He was also ordered to pay back the £7,375 as compensation to the victims. Recorder Geoffrey Kelly told him: "People lost money they worked hard for, they would have spent days and days having to contact a man they thought was an honest trader but clearly wasn't."

Mr Benjamin Williams, defending, said: "The defendant said he didn't maliciously go out to rip anyone off but go himself into a hole he couldn't get out

## V spells Victory for 1940s night

Jane Daniels from Coseley and Martin Fowkes from Sutton Coldfield (as Winston Churchill) at a 1940s night at Wednesbury Town Hall

IT may have been 2017 on the outside – but inside Wednesbury Town Hall the clock had been turned back 70 years. Nostalgia was the name of the game at the sold-out 1940s event organised by two fans of the era.

Almost 200 people dressed up in period costume for a night of music, dancing and cocktails. Dawn Craddock, whose aunt told her stories and played her music of the era, and her friend Clare Woodland were behind the event. Mother-of-two Dawn said: "I lived with my aunt when I was younger and loved dressing up in all her 1940s clothes and listening to the songs of the time, and I grew to love them too."

The 47-year-old support practitioner at Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital said the event was so popular, people travelled from as far away as Southport and Wales to attend.

Mrs Craddock said: "Everyone made the effort to come in 1940s clothes and the dance floor was full." Several guests queued up to have their photographs taken with Winston Churchill lookalike Martin Fowkes.

Another 1940s event has been planned for the weekend of August 19 and 20 at Brunswick Park, Wednesbury, when the theme will be the Blitz.

INSIDE

**EYES DOWN FOR NICE NEW NAILS**

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## CONTACT US


**EDITORIAL:**
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

**SPORTS:**
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

**PHOTOGRAPHIC:** Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

**ADVERTISING:** Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

**PROPERTY:** Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
E-mail: colin.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk

**MOTORING:** Jayne LaHiffe
Tel: 01543 465344
E-mail: jayne.lahiffe@expressandstar.co.uk

**CLASSIFIED:**
Tel: 01902 317878
E-mail: my-classified@expressandstar.co.uk

**DISTRIBUTION:** Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
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# Lots of red and white fun on the way

Thousands will be on parade

THE Black Country will turn red and white next Sunday to celebrate England's patron Saint George.

Thousands of people will take to the streets in the region to celebrate St George's Day on April 23.

Around 10,000 people are expected to descend on a St George's Day parade in Stone Cross, West Bromwich – which is believed to be the biggest in England.

Elsewhere in the Black Country, Dudley Zoo will be holding a medieval-themed St George's Day celebration.

And in Kidderminster, scouts and guides are set to march through the town centre to celebrate St George's Day. The parade in West Bromwich will be led by Royal British Legion members carrying flags and will run for 1.7 miles. It will be held on St George's Day and start from 9.45am to 5pm.

A live band will be marching amongst the crowd playing music and a horse-drawn carriage – which will see characters dressed up as a princess and a dragon – will travel among the procession. Parade founder and organiser Mark Cowels, aged 48, from West Bromwich, said: "We want people to come along and enjoy St George's Day, and get into a celebratory and patriotic mood.

"We are hoping in the region of 10,000 people come along. The parade is by far the biggest in England."

It will begin at the Horse and Jockey pub, on Stoney Lane, before heading to Dartmouth Park. A First World War exhibition will be in place showing what life was like in the trenches.

On Saturday, Tipton Library will be marking Shakespeare's birthday and St George's Day with an event from10.30am to 12.30pm, featuring music, games, crafts and a special cake table.

# Shocking figures on child obesity revealed

**ALMOST a quarter of four-year-olds in Sandwell are classed as overweight or obese, shock new figures have revealed.**

A report into children's health also revealed a whopping 41 per cent of Year 6 children are overweight – seven per cent higher than the national average.

Dinner ladies could be targeted by health chiefs trying to tackle the rising problem by being ordered not to serve children who bring their own lunch to school and avoid being over generous with portions.

Statistics showed the number of overweight children in Sandwell has risen over the last decade, with diet and a lack of exercise thought to be the major factors.

The report to Sandwell Council's children's services scrutiny board said 23.7 per cent of children in the borough were overweight or obese by the time they were in reception. It said children in Sandwell were more likely to suffer with weight problems due to 'deprivation' levels in the borough.

Scrutiny board members have now called for urgent action to try and address the problem.

### Adjusted

The council has been advised to form closer ties with schools so that levels of physical activity can be monitored.

The report said there was 'limited' engagement with schools and no data about how much exercise children were doing.

SIPS Education, which provides school meals, has adjusted sugar content in its food in response to the fears, while school dinner ladies could be given extra training to ensure children were not being over-fed, the report said.

However, there was some praise for steps taken by the authority, such as signing up 85 schools to an activity scheme and more than 40 to a healthy eating project. Councillor Liam Preece, vice-chairman of the scrutiny board, said the figures were shocking but added he believes the council is doing its best to tackle the issue.

He said: "The figures are worrying but Sandwell Council is putting forward a public health strategy which is looking at better dietary choices for parents. But we are a council, we can't tell people what to eat, we can only advise people to eat less sugar."

## We're hair to help our family

Lesley Williams, left, and mother Joan Ball, right, with Colleen Ball and Olivia, 15

A TEENAGER and her aunt have had their hair chopped for charity after two close family members were diagnosed with cancer within the space of half an hour.

Joan Ball, aged 75, and her daughter Lesley Williams, 50, from Walsall, were told they both had thyroid cancer and breast cancer respectively – at the same time and in the same hospital.

The life-changing news came on Friday, May 13 last year.

In an attempt to turn it into something positive, Lesley's daughter Olivia, aged 15, decided to get her hair chopped off and donate it to the Little Princess Trust charity, while raising money for Cancer Research UK along the way.

Her auntie and Lesley's sister, Colleen Ball, 46, promised she'd join Olivia if the fundraising total reached £100. It only took a day and the duo have managed to raise more than £1,200 between them for charity.

Colleen said: "My mom and eldest sister were both diagnosed with cancer so my sister's daughter Olivia decided to get her hair cut for charity.

"She wanted to do a good thing and we've raised quite a lot now.

"I did her sponsorships for her after getting in touch with Cancer Research.

"We both had about 14 inches cut off each.

"I've had it trimmed but not had my hair cut properly for about 15 years – I'm getting used to it now."

# More than 70 homes to be built in borough

MORE than 70 council homes are set to be built in Sandwell, it has been revealed. Bosses have agreed to buy plots on four development sites to bring about a much-needed boost to the council's housing stock.

The 74 homes, a mixture of houses and apartments, will be located on Dudley Road in Rowley Regis, Clifton Lane in West Bromwich, Simpson Street in Oldbury and Whitehall Road in Great Bridge.

The cash-strapped authority has set aside £74.1 million to build council homes, up until 2018-19 in attempt to reduce the number of people on the council house waiting list.

It follows other home developments on empty land, including a vandal-stricken former car park in Great Bridge, which could also be revived and turned into 50 apartments.

A council document states: "The development of this site will deliver residential accommodation bringing back into use a long term derelict sites, which have been an eyesore for some years."

A total of 30 homes, a mixture of two and three bedroom houses and a one bedroom apartment, will be built on the Rowley Regis site.

Ten houses, including two and three bedroom homes, will be built on the West Bromwich site.

The Oldbury site will contain eight one, two and three bedroom homes and 22 homes, including two and three bedroom houses, will be built on the Great Bridge site.

# Project guide to eating healthily

A PRACTICAL project for adults who are concerned about their diet and well-being is starting next week.

Walk Works CIC runs for 12 weekly sessions, starting on Tuesday from 10.30am at Cradley Heath Community Link's new premises on the High Street.

Vicki Smith, speaking on behalf of Walk Works CIC, said: "It's a way of sharing what we already know about food, including Black Country fittle, with a bit of expert input.

"We have a nutritionist cooking with us, Juliette Clarke, and we have passionate local gardener, Janet Armstrong, visiting with container gardening."

The project is free to adults living in Cradley Heath and Old Hill. For more information, call Fran on 07952563725 or email walkworks.cic@gmail.com.

# Homes scheme for near busy junction

THREE homes are set to be built near a busy junction in the Black Country. An application has gone in to build three properties at the corner of Portway Road and Hanover Road, Rowley Regis.

The site is near the junction wit the Birmingham New Road.

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# Music takes fans beyond the tracks at festival

A NEW three-day green field festival is to take place in Birmingham this September.

'Beyond The Tracks' festival is being held at Eastside City Park from September 15 to 17 and features some of the most up-and-coming UK music stars as well as well-known and established artists.

Friday night sees electronic music pioneers Orbital headline with the Hartnoll brothers reunited after a five-year break.

Electronic act Leftfield released one of the greatest dance records of all time and they will also be performing at Beyond The Tracks.

Faithless released some of most iconic singles in dance music history with 'Insomnia', 'God Is A DJ' and 'We Come 1'. They will also play a very special DJ set.

On Saturday, Ocean Colour Scene will take to the stage for a hometown headline performance.

Guitar quartet, Maximo Park is to perform as is Liverpool's The Coral and local boys The Twang.

Sunday night will be closed by huge multi-million selling headliners – Editors. Stafford University alumni and Birmingham residents, the band have always had a love affair with the second city. Eastside City Park is a brand-new site in Birmingham City Centre situated right next to all major transport links.

Tickets are available from http://beyondthetracks.seetickets.com. Ticket prices begin at £45.00 and must be collected from the Box Office.

# Do it yourself in the right manor

TOP tips on making beauty products, furnishings and decorations are on hand in new monthly DIY sessions at a Sandwell museum. Staff at The Manor House Museum in Hall Green Road, West Bromwich, are launching the new sessions from next Thursday.

In the first two-hour session, from 7-9pm, people can learn how to make bath bombs and body scrubs.

The creative workshop costs £6 per person and includes all materials and some refreshments.

Jane Hanney, Sandwell museums officer, said: "Every month we are running these creative do it yourself sessions which are great ways to unwind, learn something new and meet people." To book a place call the Manor House on 0121 588 2985.

# Show tells the story of YMCA

A PRODUCTION retelling the life story of the YMCA founder is coming to Birmingham. Saltmine's new production The Soul in the Machine will take place at St Martin in the Bullringon May 10 at 8pm, tickets are £3.

# Scientists shed light on ancient reptile

A view of the dinosaur predecessor

A NEW species of ancient reptile has been described by scientists at the University of Birmingham.

The work, published in a paper called Nature, has filled in a critical gap in the fossil record of dinosaur cousins.

It suggests some features thought to characterise dinosaurs evolved much earlier than previously thought.

The species, called Teleocrater rhadinus which is a carnivorous reptile, was approximately seven to 10 feet in length, had a long neck and tail, and walked on four crocodile-like legs. It roamed the Earth during the Triassic Period more than 245 million years ago – pre-dating the first true dinosaurs by around 10 million years.

Teleocrater appears in the fossil record just after a large group of reptiles, known as archosaurs which is split into a bird branch and crocodile branch. The species and its kin are the earliest known members of the bird branch of the archosaurs.

The discovery overturns widely-held preconceptions by palaeontologists about the morphology of early dinosaur relatives, with many scientists anticipating that such creatures would be smaller, bipedal and more 'dinosaur-like'.

Professor Richard Butler from the University of Birmingham, said: "Teleocrater fundamentally challenges our models of what the close relatives of dinosaurs would have looked like. Dinosaurs were amazingly successful animals. It's natural to want to know where they came from, and how they became so dominant. Teleocrater is hugely exciting because it blows holes in many of our classic ideas of dinosaur origins."

# Yobbish behaviour down by quarter under scheme

**ANTI-SOCIAL behaviour in Sandwell has been driven down by almost a quarter during the summer school holidays, it has been revealed.**

But now council bosses could make cuts to its 'summer parks programme' which has helped reduce incidents.

The scheme was launched in 2015 to help get children active during the six-week break. It was linked with reducing ASB complaints to police from 956 in 2014 to 729 in 2016. But councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said the scheme is not value for money. It comes after Sandwell Council's leisure scrutiny board received an assessment of the scheme which they say found it did benefit communities.

Councillor Marshall said the council are looking at changing how the project is delivered.

He said: "Right across the council, we are constantly reviewing how we can get the best value for money. We are looking to make sure everything is being done. We are looking to reduce spending (on the project) and we don't think it is value for money."

## Charities

Sandwell Council funded the project during the last two years. The money was given to charities, community groups and non-profit organisations who ran different activities – including football matches and arts and crafts.

The project was held in a park in each of the borough's six towns last year between July 25 and August 28. A report presented to the scrutiny panel found the project had helped to reduce the amount of ASB complaints by 24 per cent over two years.

Councillor Zahoor Ahmed, who chairs the scrutiny board, said: "The project has been excellent to be honest. Not just within Sandwell, we have had people from others boroughs come along. The overall picture shows these activities do help anti-social-behaviour issues and youngsters enjoy taking part."

The project is aimed at youngsters up until the age of 19, alongside adults and families.

A total of 519 schools in Sandwell and the surrounding areas supported the programme last year, the report stated.

Councillor Bob Lloyd, who sits on the scrutiny board, said: "The project gives kids something to do. We know anti-social-behaviour has gone down. It is good for families as it gets kids out the house and they are not bored at home."

Grace Nkounkou-Issombe, with her baby son Austin

# Inspiring Grace of sufferer

AN inspirational singer from the Black Country who is nearing the end of her treatment for an aggressive form of cancer has recorded a song about her battle with the disease.

In May last year Grace Nkounkou-Issombe, 24, and husband Ambrose Ogbechie, of Crossgate Road, Dudley, had just welcomed their first child Austin into the world when Grace started to have difficulty walking.

In July, the results of a biopsy on a lump on her right femur, previously diagnosed as benign, found osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, and treatment started immediately at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. But in December Grace made the difficult decision to have her leg amputated, as the chemotherapy wasn't proving as effective as hoped.

Thankfully the most intensive part of her chemotherapy and other treatment is now over.

Throughout her ordeal support for Grace and her family has been available from cancer support charity CLIC Sargent.

The charity works with young patients aged up to 25 and their families, and has an independent team based at the QE providing financial and emotional support to young people like Grace.

Grace said: "The song we've written means a lot to me. It's about how even when I've been in a dark place over the last year, I've never felt alone."

To find out more visit www.clicsargent.org.uk

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Problem parking spurs CCTV bid

SANDWELL Council is considering getting another CCTV camera car, in an attempt to tackle problem parking.

Cabinet member for highways and environment, Councillor David Hosell, said that he would like to see a second vehicle, as he was still seeing the issue across the borough.

Fellow Sandwell councillors have been working with Sandwell Neighbourhood Police Team on an awareness scheme called 'Don't Plonk It – Park It!', it sees advisory notices handed out to motorists who are obstructing pavements.

## Boy's 5km fun run raises £260

A SIX-YEAR-OLD boy has completed a sponsored run in a park to raise money for a charity.

Simon Gunning, who attends St Mary's Catholic Primary School, in Harborne, completed the five-kilometre challenge around Cannon Hill Park. The money raised, which totalled £260, went to Birmingham St Mary's Hospice.

Simon said: "My class at St Mary's School chose the hospice as our charity for Lent and I wanted to help get them even more money. I am very happy that I raised £260."

## Head's pride at Ofsted verdict

STAFF and pupils at Holly Lodge School in Smethwick are celebrating the result of its latest Ofsted report.

Inspectors said the school 'continues to be good' and the leadership team were fully committed to 'creating a culture of continuous school improvement'.

There are more than 1,450 pupils and they were described as 'well behaved', 'engaged enthusiastically with their learning' and 'polite and courteous to each other'.

## City parks the place to be for activities

PARKS across Birmingham are hosting thousands of free activities as ParkLives returns to the city for a fourth year.

There is Tai Chi and bushcraft, as well as zumba and nature play, taking place in more than 100 parks and green spaces, aimed at everyone, regardless of ability or experience.

Other events such as open water swimming and dodgeball also feature.

Details and locations of activities can be found at www.parklives.com

## Voting age in question

A MOCK referendum was held by secondary school students on what they felt the legal voting age should be.

A total of 178 students from Healthfutures UTC West Bromwich took part in the event. More than 100 students voted for reducing the legal age of voting to 16.


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## COUNTY NEWS

### Record-breaking start for airport

BIRMINGHAM Airport is celebrating a record-breaking start to spring after it handled tens of thousands of extra passengers last month.

New figures show 904,790 passengers passed through the airport in March, 73,000 more than in the same month in 2016, up by 8.9 per cent.

Both long and short haul services saw significant growth with long haul up by 8.3 per cent compared to the same month last year and short haul up by nine per cent. By the end of this year, it will have invested £450m on developing its infrastructure.

### £1,000 donation for A&E charity

A PIONEERING accident and emergency charity with its HQ in Birmingham has received a £1,000 donation from a leading UK housebuilder to support its latest life-saving project.

Arrive Alive Response, which will provide first response vehicles to NHS services, hospices and air ambulance across the UK, has received the donation through Persimmon Homes Central Community Champions scheme, which gives away more than £700,000 across the UK each year. The charity has been leading the way with support programmes for almost 20 years.

### DIY disasters costing £3,600

THE Midlands is the second most costly place for repairing DIY mistakes in the UK, according to new research. People in the Midlands pay more than £3,600 on repairing their DIY disasters.

Only Londoners pay more and it is people in their 20s and 30s who appear to be particularly keen to take on risky tasks usually left to professionals with 19 per cent tackling electrical wiring and 13 per cent brave enough to attempt a house extension.

### Candidate backs bus payment trial

LABOUR'S mayoral candidate for the West Midlands, Siôn Simon has welcomed the introduction of contactless payment on buses as he reiterated his pledge to freeze fares for a year.

The bus operator has begun a trial of contactless payment on services between Birmingham and Solihull, which could extend into the Black Country if successful.

It means passengers may no longer have to check they have the correct change before boarding.

### Business awards

THE Black Country Chamber of Commerce has launched its 2017 awards to find the region's best businesses.

The number of awards have been increased and the winners will be announced at an awards dinner on November 17 at Wolverhampton Racecourse. Visit www.blackcountrychamber.co.uk for details.

# It's go slow for drivers as city is hit by a swathe of roadworks

WOLVERHAMPTON has been named as one of the slowest cities in the UK for drivers – with council chiefs accused of 'waging a war against motorists'.

Analysis by vehicle tracking firm Satrak ranked Wolverhampton fifth worst for the average driving speed, with motorists travelling at 14.79mph. It follows the announcement of an upcoming 18-month swathe of roadworks on the A449.

Conservative group leader Wendy Thompson has urged bosses to rethink proposals for the scheme between Junction 2 of the M54, at Fordhouses, and Springfield Lane. Bosses had described them as 'short-term pain for long-term gain'.

But Councillor Thompson has accused the authority's Labour leadership of clogging up routes into the city which are vital for both workers and shoppers and costing businesses cash.

Labour cabinet member Milkinder Jaspal said she was 'talking nonsense'.

Councillor Thompson added: "I can't believe the amount of roadworks that are going on. The amount of time some of them are taking is absolutely incredible. The cost for businesses must be enormous and the frustration for drivers as well.

### Impression

"It is a war against motorists. We know roadworks need doing and development needs to take place. But all this work gives the impression of a lack of co-ordination and a lack of sympathy for motorists."

The aim of the newly-announced project is to improve access to i54, the Wolverhampton Business Park, and the Junction 2 employment area.

It is expected to be funded by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership 'Local Growth Fund'.

Earlier this month work began in Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton, to replace more than 1km of iron gas mains.

Other works are ongoing further south on the Stafford Road, in Wolverhampton city centre on Pipers Row, and on the Birmingham New Road near Coseley.

Councillor Jaspal said: "Saying we are waging war against motorists is a load of rubbish. We're making constant improvements to the roads and a lot of roadworks are also being done by utility companies and they are urgent work that needs to be done."

Cambridge was ranked the slowest city in the UK in the figures, with average speeds of 13.73mph.

# Potholes plague persists

**TOP OF THE POTS**

**WE asked readers to help us highlight some of our worst pothole-plagued roads – and you did not let us down.**

In fact, the problem seems to be worse than we feared with some shocking pictures of crumbling roads arriving from across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

And it would appear, from the reports we are getting, that the problem is particularly severe across Staffordshire.

Motorist Paul Gill sent us this picture of Hill Top in Hednesford where fresh road markings have simply been painted over the potholes!

He said: "The potholes around Hednesford are ridiculous particularly ALL around the islands at Hill Top (Hill Street/Uxbridge Street) but amazingly instead of them being filled they get the lines painted through them! You can see just how deep this hole is by the dip in the white line.

### Riddled

Andrew Kennerley sent us pictures of Carlisle Road on the Longford Estate which has been flagged up before by readers. He said: "I must say the surface of the Wellington Drive end of the road is completely breaking up. I have tried reporting but when the council gets round to filling one, about three appear! It's one of the worst roads I know of in Cannock."

This road was also highlighted by Sandra McLeod. She said: "The whole length of the road is riddled with very bad potholes and you cannot swerve past them in your car as residents park on the road nearly the whole length down one side mainly."

Diane Clement was one of a number of readers who pointed out another stretch of road in Staffordshire which is a pothole hotspot – the A460 between the M6 Junction 11 and the M6 Toll slip road.

She said: "This is a very busy stretch of road where traffic is travelling at a high speed (unlike the urban potholes where cars are travelling below 30mph). There are several large areas of damage to the surface of the road.

"I often take this road to get to the toll road and find I have to pick my way. At the weekend coming south on this road it was dark and I could not avoid the potholes as I was travelling at about 40mph I went bang into one of them. I think I was lucky not to damage my suspension."

And don't think that the villages are immune. In Pattingham the High Street is covered in potholes as the pictures above show. But the problem is not restricted to Staffordshire. We have already had a number of crumbling roads flagged up to us in Wolverhampton, Bloxwich and Kingswinford and now Sid Clegg has highlighted problems in Halesowen.

He said the 'whole length of Richmond Street from Windsor School gate to the brow of the hill' has potholes.

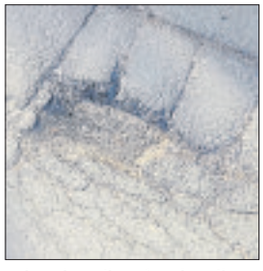
There may, however, be some relief on the way for Hednesford drivers with hopes of a road improvement scheme being carried out at Hill Top.

Hednesford and Rawnsley county councillor George Adamson said the county council had agreed to put the long-awaited road improvement scheme at Hill Top into this year's road improvements programme. The final programme is to be confirmed in the next few weeks. The scheme, at £225,000, includes resurfacing the junction and approximately 50 metres of the approaches to it. Councillor Adamson said: "Local people have been asking for this work to be done for a long time. ."

The Chronicle wants to identify the top 10 pothole blackspots in the region to flag up to our councils. If you know of any pothole-ridden routes or deep holes email details, preferably with a picture, your name and any comments you would like to make to Sue.Attwater@expressandstar.co.uk or drop us a line at Editorial, The Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Two examples of the poor state of Carlisle Road in Cannock

Paul Gill's picture of Hill Top



Here are just three of the many potholes in High Street, Pattingham and they have been there for a long time

# Group gives £20,000 to children's hospital

A HOUSING association has made a donation of more than £20,000 to Birmingham Children's Hospital after a year of fundraising.

Walsall-based whg made the contribution, totalling £23,441 to help the hospital get a step closer to its target of funding the UK's first-ever Rare Diseases Centre for children.

Staff at the landlord got behind a huge year-long fundraising drive for the hospital after it was selected as its chosen charity for 2016/17.

Fundraising initiatives over the last 12 months include a 10-mile walk to the hospital from whg's Hatherton Street office, which was organised by whg colleagues in December 2016.

The money raised will go towards the hospital's £3.65 million Star Appeal, which will fund a bespoke Rare Diseases Centre for children – the first of its kind in the UK.

Gary Fulford, whg's group chief executive, said: "Our colleagues have really put their all behind supporting Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity and have carried out some great activities to raise as much funds as possible.

"From charity walks to samosa sales, all these activities have helped raise a fantastic amount for a very worthy cause, so I want to say a big thank you to everyone who got involved.

"Hearing the difference that this amount of money will make for the hospital was heart-warming and we are very proud to have contributed towards the Star Appeal."

# Back to Boer War with days' enactments

VISITORS are being given the opportunity to travel back to Victorian times with a living history day full of bangs, crashes and military action at a Sandwell museum.

The Anglo Boer War Staffords historical interpretation group will be setting up camp in the grounds of the Manor House Museum, in Hall Green Road, West Bromwich on April 30 and May 1 between 11am-3pm.

Visitors can enjoy late Victorian historic drama, military re-enactments, displays and lots of fascinating entertainment based around the Boer War. The group will set up tents and historical displays and undertake military drills and battles.

Staff will also be giving guided tours of the Manor House which dates back to the 13th century and visitors can find out about arms and armour hundreds of years before the Boer War period as well as what life was like in the house 600 years ago. The last tour is at 2pm.

Entrance to the event both days is free. For more details call the Manor House on 0121 588 2985 or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums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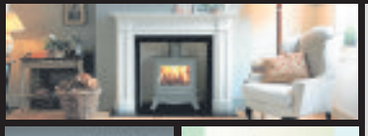

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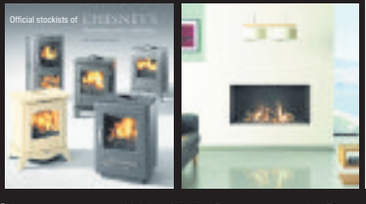

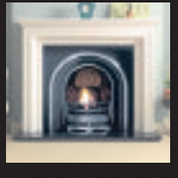

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# Mixed ward breaches due to bed shortages

MEN and women had to share wards at a Black Country hospital due to bed shortages, it has been revealed.

There were 26 'mixed sex breaches' recorded on 18 separate occasions at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital in January as the unit struggled to cope with the level of demand. Health chiefs stressed there were no care or safety risks to patients as a result of putting men and women together. The hospital is recovering from a hugely challenging winter which has seen record numbers filing into A&E.

Bed blocking has also been at an all-time high at Russells Hall. Details of the breaches have been revealed in a board report of the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs the hospital.

It stated: "The trust recorded 26 cases of mixed sex breaches on 18 separate occasions in January due to the demand for inpatient beds. The committee had gained assurance that there had been no quality or safety of care issues and no risks to patients."

Bosses were forced to issue an urgent plea for people not to attend unless they had a serious condition over the Christmas period due to the extreme pressure on services.

Trust chief executive Diane Wake, said men and women are only put on the same wards when necessary. She said: "Sharing with members of the opposite sex will only happen when clinically necessary – for example where patients need specialist equipment such as in the critical care unit – or when there is a high demand for inpatient beds."

# Father's petition tops 2,000 mark

A PETITION set up by the father of a young woman who died after being hit by a speeding car calling for killer drivers to be banned from the roads for life has been signed by more than 2,000 people in just a week.

Gerard McManus is campaigning for a new law banning those convicted of causing death by dangerous driving from ever getting behind the wheel again. He is hoping it will get the 10,000 signatures it needs to get a response from the Government.

Rebecca, from Oldbury, was 21 when she was struck by a Mitsubishi, which was racing at 100mph in a 40mph zone, as she waited at a bus stop in Bearwood. The student was just weeks away from graduating when she died.

# Zeppelin tribute gig announced

A TRIBUTE band to Led Zeppelin will play in Bilston later this month.

Fred Zeppelin will play the Robin 2 on Mount Pleasant on April 28.

Call 01902 401211 for tickets.

The group formed back in 1992.

# Travellers are served eviction notice

A concrete bollard is lifted into place

AN eviction of travellers took place after they cut down wooden bollards and gained entry to a park.

A total of three caravans had made it onto playing fields, located off Angela Avenue in Rowley Regis, before Sandwell Council blocked access to the site. Travellers were handed a common law notice by high court enforcement officers – after they gained entry last Tuesday morning – to leave by 5pm the same day.

It is was reported by council staff on the ground that travellers cut down two bollards with chainsaws at around 1am before they drove onto the site around 7am to 8am.

They were seen parked up at the opposite end of the field to the road. Police were also in attendance and they had received reports of criminal damage in relation to the bollards.

@sandwellcouncil tweeted: "We're taking action to remove an unauthorised encampment of three caravans on playing fields near Angela Avenue in Rowley Regis."

Sandwell Council parked a lorry outside the entrance to stop further travellers driving onto the land. Bailiffs were called in by the council to evict the travellers after they were alerted to the unauthorised encampment.

They were being removed under new powers brought in from January, which allows the council to evict travellers of council-owned land within 24 hours notice. Measures were also being taken to secure the site.

A concrete slab was winched into by place by the lorry in front of the park to block access, and council officers on the ground said they were planning to create a grass embankment.

# Teenage robber stole £2,500 in bank raids

**A 16-year-old boy carried out three robberies at banks in Oldbury, telling cashiers he had a gun.**

The teenager got away with more than £2,500 from TSB and Barclays. He targeted the same cashier on two occasions, leaving her petrified.

His crime spree was only halted when his father spotted him on a police appeal on Facebook. The three robberies were carried out in the space of just two weeks as the boy sought to feed his heroin habit.

A district judge at Wolverhampton Magistrates Court said he believed he would have continued to target banks had his father not called the police.

The boy, from Tividale, who cannot be named because of his age, walked into TSB on Birmingham Street on February 28, wearing a baseball cap and a hood.

He approached the counter and passed a note to cashier ordering her to give him money as he had a gun.

The teenager robber also stood menacingly with a hand in his pocket, leading frightened workers to believe he really did have a weapon, when in reality he didn't.

The woman pressed her panic alarm and put £840 into a bag. She believed her ordeal was over – only for him to return 10 days later. He went back to the same cashier and this time managed to get away with £1,240.

Six days later, on March 15, he went into Barclays, in Church Square, where he pulled the same trick, passing the note to the female cashier warning he had a gun, and escaped with £450.

The first cashier, a mother-of-two, said the robberies had made her doubt whether she wanted to continue in her job. A victim impact statement said: "This incident for the first time made me fear my job. It made me scared for myself and my family."

The youth, who pleaded guilty to three charges of robbery at a previous hearing, broke down in tears as he was sentenced.

District Judge Michael Wheeler said he was not prepared let the boy off a custodial sentence as his crimes were so serious, and he gave him two year's detention.

Mr Frank Callier, defending, said: "He is a vulnerable young man with difficulties. Youngsters do not always appreciate the impact on their behaviour and do not always think about the consequences."

# Pampering is nailed on at Mecca

Getting her nails done whilst playing bingo, is Zoe Bradburn, being pampered by Natalie Holland

CUSTOMERS at a bingo hall in the Black Country are not only in with a chance of winning big but can also indulge in a spot of pampering.

An in-club nail bar has launched at Mecca Bingo at Wednesbury Cross – meaning customers have access to a little TLC. Expert nail technicians will be on hand to provide a range of treatments from gel manicures to dazzling acrylics.

Bosses at the bingo hall called the nail bar a 'fantastic' addition to the venue They set up the facility after they held talks about how they could offer more for their customers.

As a majority of players are female, they felt the idea of a nail bar was well suited to the hall.

Terry Connelly, manager of Mecca Wednesbury Cross, said: "We were thinking about what else we can offer our customers so we decided to test the water with the in-club nail bar so we'll wait and see how popular it is.

"Around 70 per cent of our players are female so we think it's a great idea. Who knows, some of the males may want to have their nails done too."

There are also halls in Bilston, Brierley Hill and Oldbury. To find out more, call 07758024075. Joining the club is free of charge and anyone can sign-up at www.meccabingo.com or at the club.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### City site bought for apartments

A MULTI-MILLION pound development of 385 apartments could now go ahead after developers acquired a sought-after site in Birmingham's Southside district.

A joint venture between London based developer Galliard Homes and Apsley House Capital has purchased a long leasehold interest in the land located between Pershore Street, Hurst Street, Claybrook Street and Skinner Lane.

The partnership is hoping to build a mix of one, two and three-bed apartments and ancillary parking.

### Crash teen riders taken to hospital

TWO teenagers were taken to hospital with head injuries after the motorcycle they were riding was involved in a crash with a car in Birmingham.

The incident happened on Horton Square, just off Belgrave Middleway near to Birmingham Central Mosque around 1pm last Wednesday.

An ambulance spokesman said the 15-year-old rider was taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital, whilst the victim aged 16 went to Queen Elizabeth Hospital, adding: "When ambulance staff arrived on scene neither had a helmet on."

### Joel fundraising run countdown

REGISTRATION for a charity fun run has now opened. The second Run for Joel event – in memory of Tunisia terror attack victims Joel Richards, his uncle Adrian Evans and grandfather Patrick Evans – takes place in September and it has been open to entries from last Friday

Organisers have announced that registration for the run on Sunday, September 10 opens at 9am.

To enter visit smileforjoel.com and click on the 'events' page.

### Baggies' Ben hopes to net shirt boost

BIDDING has begun on a shirt worn and signed by a Premier League star which is being auctioned by Albion goalkeeper Ben Foster. There have been 13 donations so far on a shirt signed by Manchester United's David de Gea.

Anyone who gives £10 will then go into a prize draw with the chance of winning the shirt. The Baggies number one is raising money for Care Leukaemia. People can donate at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/benfosters

### Paws for showtime

A CHILDREN'S animated TV series will take to the stage in Birmingham.

Paw Patrol Live brings everybody's favourite pups to the Barclaycard Arena on August 12 and 13.

Tickets are now on sale via www.theticketfactoru.com and are priced from £29.03.

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## IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

# Now I have to apply for imaginary tax disc!

BENJAMIN Franklin famously said: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes," but even so, I was a bit surprised to get a reminder for my car tax last week.

The reason being that my car reached its 40th birthday in May last year, meaning it should be exempt from road tax.

The DVLA no longer provides a telephone number on the renewal form to help with these queries – nobody seems to want to talk over the phone any more, everything has to be online – but after a bit of perseverance I eventually found the number.

After a quarter of an hour on hold, somebody eventually explained that I would have to go into a Post Office with all the documents, apply for a new log book, and when it comes back I will then be able to apply for an imaginary tax disc which will be issued free of charge.

AND I thought the idea of computers was to cut bureaucracy.

❒❒❒

DO politicians ever learn? Exactly a year since the Government spent £9 million on leaflets telling us why we should vote to stay in the EU, they're at it again.

Last week glossy leaflets dropped through the letterbox telling us all about next month's election for a West Midlands mayor, or "Greater Birmingham" as they really see it, even if they won't say so. A battlebus is also touring the region, telling us why we should all turn out to vote.

Well , I'm sorry, but I will be making a point of not voting. As a dyed-in-the-wool Black Country mon I feel no affinity whatsoever with Birmingham, Coventry or Solihull. As far as I'm concerned, Birmingham – where the power will ultimately rest – is just as alien and remote as Westminster, and I'm heartily sick of the perception that anywhere between Warwick and Stoke is essentially a suburb of the second city.

Perhaps if the powers that be are really serious about devolving power to local communities, it might not be a bad idea asking them what they are before imposing it?

❒❒❒

A NEW study shows that parents in the West Midlands are prepared to pay a £52,000 premium to live close to a school with an "outstanding" Ofsted inspection. PERHAPS that should not come as too much of a surprise. Most parents will want the best for their children, and you can't put a price on education, although I do wonder what happens to house prices when the schools are put into special measures a few years later.

# What pupils need is a dollop of commitment

Jeremy Corbyn aims to to slap 20 per cent VAT on private-school fees

Victoria Coren Mitchell's fiendishly difficult quiz show has now been dis-connected

Jon Platt, the dad who dared to take his daughter to Florida in term time

# Teaching is not a free portion of pie

## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

NOT sure about Jeremy Corbyn's plan to slap 20 per cent VAT on private-school fees and use the money to provide free lunches for kids in the state sector. Some parents scrimp and save to send their children to independent schools and probably have less disposable income than the parents of the kids Corbyn wants to feed. In any case, the real factor in teaching children is not a free portion of shepherd's pie, but a dollop of commitment. The kids who do well at school, whether public or state, are the ones who come from families or cultures where education is seen as a great gift.

THE latest Supreme Court ruling says you can't take kids out of school for term-time holidays but you can remove them for "religious observance." I am delighted to launch The Church of the Blessed Walt. A strict requirement of this faith is a two-week pilgrimage each year, in term time, to The Sacred Towers of Eurodisney.

NOW that the judges have come down like a ton of wigs on Jon Platt, the dad who dared to take his daughter to Florida in term time, can we expect a similar crusade against those traveller and gipsy families whose kids drift in and out of education, racking up some of the worst literacy and health levels in the Western world? Thought not.

TERMS for our time. Until this week I had never heard of pop-up brothels. Apparently they are set up for a few days or weeks in houses or flats hired from unwitting landlords, sometimes under the Airbnb system. And you thought that lovely American lady was taking Bible classes?

ANYWAY, I dare say pop-up brothels serve a certain sector of society. But as the babyboomers grow older and the whole UK population ages, where are the pop-up chiropodists, the pop-up bingo parlours and the pop-up denture repairers? Knock three times and ask for Steradent.

A REPORT by the Police Superintendents' Association claims that 24-hour drinking, introduced by relaxing licensing laws in 2003, has led to a massive increase in alcohol-related crime in the early hours. Meanwhile, another report shows that throwing petrol on a fire does not extinguish it, and that bears, after a heavy meal, often head for forested areas.

GARDENER'S World has been extended to one hour on BBC2, swallowing the slot formerly held by Victoria Coren Mitchell's fiendishly difficult quiz show, Only Connect. After many weeks of being made to feel stupid in your own home, you will now be made to feel inadequate in your own garden.

AS you may have gathered, I firmly believe the population is divided not so much socially or politically but between two ancient and irreconcilable tribes: the optimists and the pessimists. So I am grateful to a new radio series, Glass Half Full (R4), for showing us that it is entirely possible for one clever doctor to be wildly optimistic about the future of personalised, gene-driven medicine, while the equally clever doctor next to him is deeply depressed about the coming global pandemic which will wipe out about one-fifth of humanity.

ORDER, order! The House of Lords has entered the row over television dramas with some peers complaining about 'mumbling' actors. Talk about pot and kettle. Have you ever watched and heard the House of Lords on telly? It is Mumbleland.

THE one thing everybody knows is that the Famous Five washed down their grub with 'lashings of ginger beer'. The truth, however, is that this classic phrase appears nowhere in Blyton's adventures.

FOR as long as I can remember, the experts have been predicting the return of the airship. How many times have we seen artists' impressions of giant silver slugs cruising over the clouds? Truth to report, I've only ever seen one in real life. Latest into the ring is an African-based company which is now promising to bring together US airship technology with vast reserves of helium gas in Tanzania. So that's blimps and squeaky voices.

IN the old days, airships were filled with highly inflammable hydrogen which produced some terrible disasters, notably the destruction of the Hindenburg at New Jersey in 1937. Helium is much safer. Helium is inert but hydrogen is ert. Very ert.

I'M not sure how the latest diesel-compensation scheme is expected to work. Encouraged by the Labour Government, millions of drivers bought diesel vehicles in the belief that they would save the planet from carbon dioxide. We are now told they kill 40,000 people a year through nitrogen dioxide pollution. Some cities are now proposing a 'toxins tax', to be paid by any diesel driver entering their patch. But Theresa May seems to be hinting that drivers may be offered financial help, but has not gone into any detail. The silliest possible solution, of course, would be for local council officials to tax motorists and Whitehall officials to hand the money back. So that couldn't happen...

## TALKING POINT

# The lowlife fly-tippers need to be binned off

FLY-TIPPERS are thoughtless neanderthals who must be pursued by the authorities with unrivalled vigour and forced to pay eye-wateringly high fines.

But I can't help wondering why fly-tipping is increasingly on such a rapid scale. It's becoming an epidemic.

How can there be so much rubbish dumped in these modern times when we are also supposed to be more environmentally aware, resolutely adhering to strict recycling rules, following our dogs around with plastic bags and reducing our carbon footprints to a toe prints?

Yet still our countryside and open spaces are being littered with everything from fridges, to mattresses with stonking big lorries pulling up and dumping their load.

Is there a Mr Big co-ordinating organised fly-tipping across the region? Or are there other factors which are leading the more moronic individuals in society to abandon legitimate means of waste disposal to dump their rubbish on any secluded spot of land they can find?

For example, the fact that many of our tips have had their opening hours reduced. Worryingly, there are discussions already under way to close sites in the Dudley and Wolverhampton boroughs to make way for new super tips. In Staffordshire, charges have recently been introduced at the tips for such items as tyres, soil and plasterboard.

On top of that collections are increasingly being reduced to fortnightly by councils, though we aren't getting bigger bins, and heaven forbid your wheelie bin should go walkabout because that is going to cost you!

Meanwhile we live in fear of bin-spectors who 'tag' our bins should a stray item appear in the wrong bin. I have had that walk of shame as I arrived home to see a red tag applied to my bin and the threatening letter warning that it will not be collected.

Thousands and thousands of pounds are spent by councils cleaning up after fly-tippers. How many staff hours must be cut or charges – £4.80 per tyre – collected for councils to come close to meeting these bills?

Clearly councils are not to blame for fly-tipping – that's down to the lowlife who think it is ok to litter our countryside with their unwanted tat - but the authorities are not helping and may well be making matters worse.

We law-abiding citizens pay our council tax and expect the tips to be open. We don't want to be hammered with additional charges. But we are losing out while our money is spent cleaning up after these lowlife.

Councils need to think how their cutbacks are adding to the problem. And it would be nice if the courts that deal with these mindless litterbugs hit them with breathtakingly high fines that could help meet the cost of keeping our tips open!

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# UK was conned into joining with Europe

WHILST agreeing with the sentiments of Mr R Griffiths (March 30) that the Scots should remain in the union, I have issues with some of his comments.

I fail to understand why he thinks it is an 'obvious mess' to undertake the Brexit negotiations. The United Kingdom existed as a successful trading nation before we were 'conned' into joining what was to be a 'Common Market'. We dealt with Europe and our friends in the Commonwealth without any serious issues. Before our acceptance, our French neighbours had in fact blocked our admission for about 10 years.

The tie up has indeed given us many benefits in law and regulation as well as a few ridiculous 'bent banana' type edicts! However, as I have said to many people, 'would you invest in a company, bank or building society that has not published an audit for years?'.

As for the rebellious Mrs Sturgeon and her cohorts it is time to point out the difficulty of them supporting their own independence. The first minister is posturing like the capercaillie for since shipbuilding has now gone and the oil has run out, I am unable to see how they could exist outside the union. Scots are not charged for prescriptions or tuition fees, but these are not free, but they are paid for by the taxpayers of the rest of the union!

I am not anti-Scot and have Scottish friends and admire many of their great men like Scott, Carnegie and Balfour as well as the great and brave Scottish regiments but we as a nation have always honoured the result of elections and referenda.

**JOHN CHAMBERLAIN**
Great Barr

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**POST**
Sandwell Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

**EMAIL**
sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

*Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at www.ipso.co.uk. If you are unhappy with the accuracy of a story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES*

## Democracy today so different

WE have been members of the European Union now for 43 years – that is fact.

It is also fact many millions on this island have no memory of politics before the EU and therefore no knowledge of the level of democracy we enjoyed then.

Brexit occurred because the leavers where heartily sick of being treated like second-class citizens by the ruling elite. Why the British working man pays the highest taxes and receives the lowest state pension, is ruled by the disgraceful 'zero working hours' policy and the bedroom tax while its politicians award themselves a fat pay package, gold-plated pension and annual expenses.

Clearly many have made a fortune out of the EU and are loath to see it end. We are currently subsidising 18 of the 28 member countries and none seem inclined to make the effort to end this situation.

**NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED**

## Tribute to former Town club doctor

FOLLOWING the sad news of the passing of local retired GP and former Halesowen Town FC club doctor Herbert Jones, who was with the club for over 30 years.

The word doc is a word often used within a football club. To have a club doctor at non-league level of step three and below is unique and also to have someone of the experience, knowledge and human qualities.

The club doctor is not a normal practitioner, although medical expertise is indispensable, they need other qualities to be fully effective – passion, the ability to talk on the same level as players and a liking for football. Doc Jones had all these qualities and more. He, myself and the rest of the backroom team and the managers he served, helped keep the show on the road for many years.

**GAVIN BLACKWELL**
Tipton

## Following Sturgeon is a folly

NICOLA Sturgeon seems determined to lead Scotland to the backwaters of obscurity or even bankruptcy.

The Scots are a canny race who democratically voted to remain part of the UK.

They knew by voting to remain a part of the UK they would be well-rewarded with subsidies.

I believe if they were given a second referendum the result would be same.

Miss Sturgeon is of the opinion that the EU would welcome an independent Scotland.

However after the turmoil of Greece, would the EU really want another poor country to join their membership? Because without massive subsidies from the rest of the UK there is no doubt Scotland would be considerably poorer.

Be careful what you wish for Miss Sturgeon; or you could well end up with an independent with no subsidies and nowhere to go.

**BRIAN CLARK**
Smethwick

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# New chief drafted in to take charge of prison hit by riot

**A TROUBLED West Midland jail – which saw hundreds of prisoners riot last year – has taken on a new chief. HMP Birmingham has appointed Richard Stedman as director.**

Mr Stedman, previously the director at HMP Rye Hill near Rugby, takes control of Winson Green prison from outgoing chief Pete Small as it prepares to return to full operational capacity later this month.

The G4S-run prison reduced its capacity down to 990 after the riots but this month will return to 1,450.

Mr Stedman said: "HMP Birmingham has an experienced staff team with a very long history and tradition of courage, public service and pride in the prison. The team passionately believes in the possibility of reform for the men in their care and I am looking forward to building on innovations such as the UK's first prisoner on prisoner debating competition, held at Birmingham last summer.

### Disorder

"Birmingham is a busy, local prison and I will be focused on ensuring we successfully reopen the wings affected by disorder at the end of last year and return the prison to a path of continuous development and innovation."

He arrives at the prison with a favourable reputation after leading the successful re-purposing of Rye Hill in 2014 to become a category B sex offender only facility, the only one of its type in the country.

Outgoing director Mr Small said: "I am proud to have led the HMP Birmingham team over a period of significant change and in more recent times, some very difficult moments. I am confident that they will not be defined by the events of December 2016 but instead will push forward, grow and ultimately surpass the high expectations they set for themselves."

## Jail term cut for benefits cheat woman

A REPENTANT benefits cheat who did not tell the authorities she was working has had her jail term cut by top judges. Belinder Kaur, aged 59, of Scott Road, Great Barr, was put behind bars for 14 weeks at Wolverhampton Crown Court on March 14.

Kaur, of previous good character, was entitled to various benefits including incapacity benefit, Mr Justice William Davis told London's Appeal Court. But between August 2010 and August 2015 there were times when she was working for several months at a time, but she did not tell the authorities and received more than £9,000.

Kaur admitted three counts of dishonestly failing to notify a change of circumstances affecting her entitlement to benefit payments. Before sentence she had agreed to pay back the amount, with £3,000 paid off.

She had 'significant health problems' and her remorse was 'clearly genuine' given the repayments, said Mr Justice Davis. Jason Pegg, for Kaur, argued her jail term was far too tough and ought to be cut.

The Crown Court judge had said that an immediate custodial term was the only 'appropriate sentence'. But he 'fell into error in reaching that conclusion', said Mr Justice Davis.

The judge reduced her jail term to eight weeks, who added that the term should have been suspended.

## Gym reopens after £120,000 revamp

A GYM has reopened after undergoing a £120,000 refurbishment. Smethwick Swimming Centre (SLT), in Thimblemill Road, will feature new gym equipment and a sauna, pools, dance studio and meeting rooms.

Paul Baddams, SLT's fitness development officer, said: "We are committed to enhancing customer experience. This equipment is the very latest in the industry."

## Hats off for tea party is on the cards

Volunteers Gill Blundell and Bethany Taylor enjoy a spot of tea and cake at the Mad Hatter's tea party

A COMMUNITY centre was transformed into a wonderland as families and volunteers enjoyed a Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

It was a double celebration, as Greets Green community enterprise marked the first anniversary of their successful Happy Days nursery at Wood Lane Community Centre in West Bromwich, as well as a £40,000 grant from Asda which has enabled them to carry out vital renovations.

The enterprise works to provide activities, education and care for those in the surrounding community, including to the most deprived.

This includes through the Happy Days nursery, which last month earned a 'good' Ofsted rating, after being praised for 'providing high-quality care and learning experiences for children' by the education watchdog.

Chair of Greets Green community enterprise, Fajli Bibi, said: "It has been such a beautiful day for our tea party and we have seen lots of families come along and enjoy themselves.

"We also had a birthday cake to mark the first year anniversary of our nursery, which has just been rated 'good' by Oftsed and is only a few marks off 'outstanding'. The money from Asda enabled us to renovate the space for the nursery, and provide security such as CCTV. We are very grateful for all of the support."

## Group starts search for best GP staff

SANDWELL and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has launched its General Practice Stars of 2017 awards.

These inaugural awards aim to showcase and celebrate the hard work and staff commitment in delivering good consistent patient care. Patients are encouraged to be involved with the process by nominating a GP or Nurse they believe deserves recognition.

Andy Williams, accountable officer, said: "I would encourage any patient who thinks their GP or nurse needs a special thank you, to nominate them for one of these prestigious awards. Just by being shortlisted for an award is a huge morale boost and honour for practice staff."

Nominations for the GP of the Year and Nurse of the Year awards close on Friday May 5. The awards ceremony will take place mid-June. For details visit: www.sandwellandwestbhamccg.nhs.uk/gpawards2017.

# Pub sets out it goal to gain fans' custom

Paul and Steven Hayer at the Hawthorns pub which is back open after being refurbished inside

A POPULAR pub among West Bromwich Albion fans has reopened with a new look, following a refurbishment.

The future of The Hawthorns pub, on the Ross in Blackheath, was in doubt after being put up for auction a couple of months ago.

It was listed as 'suitable for a variety of alternative uses subject to obtaining any appropriate planning permission' but new owner Steven Hayer wants it to remain a hotspot for Baggies supporters, with a freshened-up feel.

"We have refurbished the pub inside and we want to keep it as a local pub," said Mr Hayer. "So often you see pubs bought at auction and then planning permission going in straight away to turn the site into houses or apartments. We want the community and West Brom fans to come here and enjoy it.

"Thousands of pounds has gone into the refurbishment – it's been decorated, painted and will have a different, new look to it." Albion fans tend to visit the pub in large numbers on a matchday.

Mr Hayer, who purchased the pub for an undisclosed sum and will be running it, has pledged it will remain a pub as long as it can turn a profit, and is well-received by the community. "Hopefully we can get plenty of fans down here on a matchday, and regulars here as well," he said.

"We will have food at some point. We have spent money on the kitchen but we are still in the process of creating a menu and hiring a chef – it is very much on the agenda though.

"It's a shame that so many pubs are closing down but hopefully we can get this place thriving." He added: "It's a lovely pub to be honest and the response so far from locals we have spoke to has been good – they are happy that the pub is re-opening."


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# Expert on halal food in role at hospital

AN expert is to be brought in at Sandwell Hospital to review halal food following concerns about its menu. The hospital has been urged to do more to increase the quality of meals on offer.

The expert has been brought in by Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, which runs Sandwell General as well as City Hospital, to deliver professional advice on what should go on the menu.

It comes as the trust was criticised over the quality of halal meals on offer to patients in November. Waseem Zaffar, who sits on the board, previously said he was unhappy about the lack of progress to improve what is on the menu at the hospital.

Trust chief executive Toby Lewis, revealed at the latest board meeting he had 'commissioned a halal expert' following the criticisms.

Speaking after the meeting, he said: "Based on patient feedback, and at the request of our trust board, we are taking professional advice to understand the most cost effective option by which to provide halal food for staff, patients and visitors."

## Schools' old boys set for reunion

THE details of the annual two schools' Old Boys Association reunion dinner have been announced. Ex-pupils from Holly Lodge Grammar and James Watt Technical Schools in Smethwick are invited to join the dinner.

The pals, who meet annually, raised over £1000 for charity last year. The reunion is at The Tally Ho, Conference & Banqueting Centre, Pershore Road in Birmingham on May 12. Tickets are £32. Call Martin Baines on 01562 886275 or email OldboysHLJW@outlook.com before April 28.

# We just miss them so much – victims' father and husband

Victim – 13-year-old Pierce

West Bromwich Albion players pay tribute to the victims of the attack, before the match against Liverpool

Tracey Wilkinson, who was aged 50

**'WE just miss them so much. We were really happy. Now our lives have got a huge hole in them.'**

The heartbreaking words of devastated father Peter Wilkinson who has spoken for the first time since his wife and son were stabbed to death at their Black Country home.

In an exclusive interview with the Chronicle's sister newspaper, the Express & Star, Mr Wilkinson paid tribute to his 'absolute angel' wife Tracey and 13-year-old son Pierce and revealed the extensive injuries he suffered in the attack.

**Report by David Banner**

The 47-year-old, who is a managing director at Hill & Smith and Asset International in Bilston where he has worked for 17 years, was lucky to survive after being stabbed multiple times in the horrific incident at the family home in Greyhound Lane, Stourbridge.

Tragically son Pierce, who went to Redhill School, and 50-year-old Tracey died in the attack on March 30.

Last Tuesday Peter left the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham where he has spent the best part of a fortnight.

He is now recuperating at a relative's home, with 18-year-old daughter Lydia, who was thankfully away studying at the University of Bristol when the attack happened.

The two – season ticket holders at West Bromwich Albion – were at The Hawthorns on Sunday for the televised match against Liverpool where players and fans joined in a minute's applause as the big screen showed pictures of Tracey and Pierce.

Fighting back tears Peter said: "We were in a happy family bubble, the four of us. Lydia was at Bristol University doing great. Pierce was at school which he loved. And my wife was an absolute angel. We had such a happy family life. We are good people.

"We always helped others. We are a charitable family. My wife did a lot of work to help other people. She wouldn't walk past a homeless person on the street without stopping to give them a sandwich. She was that type of person."

Lydia, who visited their home earlier this month to lay flowers as well as read the dozens of messages left by well wishers, added: "They were loved by everyone. They are irreplaceable. Just extraordinary people."

Revealing the extent of his injuries, Peter said: "I nearly lost my life. I got six deep stab wounds. I had a lot of internal injuries and was in intensive care for six days. It was touch and go.

"I had to have a vast amount of stitches, which are all out now.

"I was supposed to be in for a few weeks but I came out after 12 days. I am well enough to come out, I am just on painkillers trying to rest and recuperate."

While the physical wounds may heal the emotional scars of having his family torn apart will remain. But despite their catastrophic loss, both are keen to move on with their lives no matter how long it takes.

Lydia said the 'tremendous' support from their friends and family had helped them stay strong, while Peter added: "We are just taking things one day at a time, one hour at a time."

Aaron Barley, aged 23, of no fixed address has been charged with two counts of murder. Barley is set to be tried in October.


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# Bus group to invest £600k for expansion

**BUS group Rotala is to invest £600,000 in improving its depot in Tividale, which will mean more than double the number of buses being in operation.**

Chairman John Gunn announced the investment by the company, which owns Diamond Bus, which is based in Hallbridge Way, off Tipton Road.

The group gained additional depot capacity in the West Midlands through an acquisition in 2013. It sold a four-acre depot in Long Acre, Birmingham, in December 2015, for £2.5 million.

It bought three acres of land on a site adjacent to the large depot in Tividale giving the group a combined 6.7-acre freehold site for its operations there.

The new land cost £380,000 and it brought with it a substantial building suitable for conversion into Rotala's centre of bus operations for the whole West Midlands division.

We intend to invest about £600,000 in demolishing part of the building, converting the remainder, and making the whole site suitable for bus operation," said Mr Gunn. "This investment, for which planning permission has been received and

Report by John Corser

the planning conditions now satisfied, will enable us to more than double the number of buses we can operate from this depot."

He said the new Buses Bill was expected to bring Rotala considerably greater opportunities in the West Midlands area and the investment would enable it to take full advantage of these.

"In the last year the Buses Bill has begun its progress through Parliament and new regional authorities have been created to take advantage of the anticipated powers," he added. "The Bill, as expected, covers the re-franchising of bus networks in major cities."

Rotala made £2.68m pretax profit in the 12 months to the end of November with turnover up eight per cent to £55m.

# Wonderbox opens up for actress Danica, 25

**The Wonderbox cast from front to back, Danica Corns, Claire Rammelkamp, Carla Garratt and Larissa Pinkham**

ACTRESS Danica Corns is heading home to reveal her brand new show to a West Midland audience following its sell-out debut in London. Danica, aged 25, from Wednesbury, developed the comedy after co-founding her own theatre company Wonderbox with fellow actresses from the National Youth Theatre.

Entitled A Womb of One's Own, the production is described as 'a superbly humorous dark comedy that follows university student Babygirl as she navigates her way through new-found independence and not-so-steamy sexual encounters only to board the emotional rollercoaster that is an unwanted pregnancy.' The Wonderbox team produce, write and perform their own original work.

A former member of Stage2 Youth Theatre in Birmingham, Danica said: "We all know acting is a tough industry to break into – and I'm not the sort of person to just sit around and wait for auditions to come in – so I decided to form my own theatre company as a way to stay creative."

The former Wood Green High School and Sandwell Academy pupil chose Birmingham for their first regional performance which is at The Old Joint Stock Theatre on May 10.

Well-known actor Paul McGann, saw A Womb of One's Own in London this February and stated: "I loved this. Skill and daring from a really promising young company." Tickets for the show are £10 and available at oldjointstock.co.uk/whats-on/a-womb-of-ones-own.

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# Magic of the West End hits the Hippodrome

**A STRING of smash-hit West End shows – including the first ever tour of the RSC's Matilda The Musical – are due to come to Birmingham as part of the Hippodrome's new season.**

The packed programme sees the return of the international hits Wicked and War Horse, as well as Tim Firth's hotly anticipated new musical-comedy The Band featuring the music of Take That.

Details of the 2017-18 new season, which also includes top names in ballet, opera and contemporary dance, have just been announced.

At the same time, the theatre will be expanding its reputation for presenting new and smaller-scale productions in its 200-seat Patrick Centre studio.

Wicked will be the first of the big musicals to arrive, taking a 25-day slot between April 4 and 29 next year, followed by Matilda The Musical which starts a two-month residency on July 3, running until September 8.

War Horse returns to the Hippodrome from October 10 to November 3. The theatre also welcomes the return of Sir Matthew Bourne's Cinderella and, following their sell-out success with The Nutcracker last year, Birmingham Royal Ballet are back with a new show, Aladdin.

Previously announced productions include the West End and Broadway phenomenon La Cage Aux Folles, starring John Partridge and Adrian Zmed, Grease, with The Wanted's Tom Parker, and the first ever UK tour of The Addams Family, starring Samantha Womack and Les Dennis.

This summer also sees the return of the internationally-acclaimed National Theatre production of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and Sir Cameron Mackintosh's new production of Miss Saigon. Other autumn visits include Beautiful, The Carole King Musical, Sunset Boulevard starring Ria Jones as Norma Desmond, and the debut tour of Carlos Acosta's new dance company Acosta Danza.

Fiona Allan, artistic director and chief executive of Birmingham Hippodrome, said: "Our claim to being 'The West End in the West Midlands' is further reinforced with the launch of our new season as we enter an extraordinary 18-month period.

"And next year will be even bigger as both Wicked and War Horse return either side of a summer season of the RSC's Matilda which arrives at Birmingham Hippodrome on its first ever UK Tour in 2018."

Matilda The Musical, based on the work of children's author Roald Dhal

War Horse, the acclaimed play based on Michael Morpurgo's book

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# Donna bringing smiles into lives of patients

**HOSPITAL worker Donna Hawkins has gone from one extreme to another – from keeping up with active toddlers to keeping the minds of elderly patients active.**

And it's a move that the 48-year-old hasn't regretted. For 29 years Donna has worked at City Hospital's children's nursery, until it closed last year.

But she was delighted to find a job as an activity co-ordinator for patients suffering from dementia and delirium within Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs City Hospital.

In her unique role, she spends one-to-one time with these often isolated frail individuals, gathering background information about their interests and hobbies and planning meaningful activities on the ward for them.

## Valued

She tailors the activity to each individual patient and is an excellent listener.

Her work makes patients feel valued and listened to, and she always brings a smile to each face when she arrives on the ward with an engaging activity for her patients to do.

And that's exactly what drives Donna, from Great Barr.

She says: "This is a new job for me and I am still learning the ropes – but it's a very worthwhile role.

"When you see the slightest smile on a patient's face, it makes it all so rewarding. And I work with a great group of therapists too.

"I am very excited about the job and it's a real change to what I did previously – working with children."

A typical day for Donna starts with her liaising with the nurses about the patients. She makes up a list of who she will see that day and decides on the activities she will carry out with them.

She explained: "Patients like your company and like to chat about what they have done in the past. Especially those with dementia.

"They also have really interesting stories to tell. I could be with one patient for an afternoon.

"But sometimes I'll see up to six a day. It all depends on them and how they are feeling.

"One patient used to be in a team for Irish dancing, so I printed off some information for them and she loved looking through it.

"We have great little boxes full of things from the 1940s and 50s, and sometimes I spend time with a patient looking through them. There's another who likes to paint so I have set up a sessions with them doing just that.

"I love the interaction – that's what it is all about." For Donna, her next big challenge is to develop the service further. She said: "I want to continue with what I am doing and build up more of the activity side."

When she's not working Donna likes to get away from it all by going on holiday to Wales with her husband – who she lists as one of her three very own heroes.

"I'd also say my mum and dad are also two more people who I look up to.

"They have done so much for me throughout my life and brought me up to be who I am."

## NHS HEROES

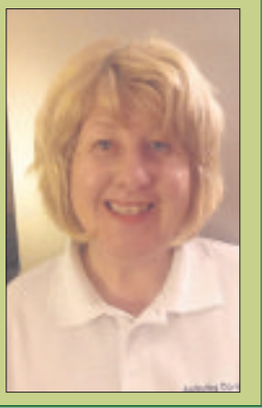
**ONCE again we focus some of our time on the quiet heroes of the NHS, from a wide variety of backgrounds doing a wide variety of jobs.**

**Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is one of the Black Country's largest NHS organisations.**

**It employs 7,500 people, many of whom live locally.**

**Last year, the trust provides care from 150 locations.**

**This week we highlight: DONNA HAWKINS Activity co-ordinator, Medicine therapy team.**



# End of the takeaways as Nikki builds a new life

**SHE used to love nothing better than downing booze and eating takeaways.**

But now Nikki Harvey has swapped the shots for squats in the gym shedding five stone to become a bodybuilder.

Nikki spent two years travelling Australia where she gained weight, becoming a size 16 after indulging in daily takeaways and regularly binge drinking.

The 24-year-old – who also smoked 20 cigarettes a day – can now deadlift 100 kilograms and has shrunk to a size six, weighing 8st 1lbs.

Miss Harvey, from Wolverhampton, said: "I absolutely hated the gym, I'd never step foot in one. But as soon as I lifted a weight I fell in love with it.

## Training

"I train twice a day, six times a week and I'm down to 10 per cent body fat."

Miss Harvey went to Ounsdale High School in Wombourne, before going to King Edward VI College in Stourbridge.

The self-confessed yo-yo dieter, struggled with her weight for years and at her biggest, she weighted 13 and a half stone – but it wasn't until she saw a photo of herself in a bikini that she realised she needed to lose weight.

She said: "I graduated from university and went travelling around South East Asia and Australia for two years.

"I'd always been a yo-yo dieter. I would do milkshakes for four weeks then binge for four weeks, so I was up and down all the time.

For the two years I was travelling I never really had a kitchen, so it was just a constant supply of takeaways and alcohol. I wasn't aware I was putting on weight though. But then I saw a picture of me in a bikini next to a waterfall and I didn't recognise myself.

Nikki Harvey before her transformation. Pic from Caters News

And now – Nikki has shed five stone and is training for third competition

"I couldn't believe I was looking at me – I'd piled on the weight and I was in a really bad place. I would break down and cry every time I saw myself in a mirror."

Her old diet consisted of skipping breakfast, before enjoying a Subway at lunch and indulging on a large bag of Haribo everyday and a kebab or takeaway after a night out.

She would drink three to four pints of cider and a bottle of wine. Bordering on obesity with a BMI of 30, at 5ft 5in she had already started dating rugby player Jordan Burgess, who she then asked to help her lose weight. She started exercising while she was still in Australia in 2015, and found the first 20lbs dropped quite quickly.

By the time she came back to the UK in September 2015, she was down to a size 12 and stepped her training up even more.

Her current diet has changed dramatically and consists of 30 grams of oats with blueberries for breakfast, chicken and vegetables for lunch, a snack of tuna with salad and avocado and chicken and vegetables again for dinner with yogurt with protein powder for supper.

Nikki has quit smoking and doesn't drink, except for the odd gin and slimline tonic at a wedding. She is currently training for her third bodybuilding competition.

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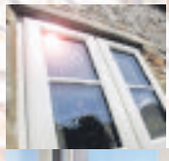

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# Mayor launches nursing agency branch office

THE team at a national nursing agency staff provider were joined by the Mayor of Sandwell to celebrate the opening of their new branch in West Bromwich.

Councillor Julie Webb was invited to open the branch office and to learn more about the valuable services Nurse Plus staff would be providing to the local community with an official ribbon cutting.

Branch manager Dilip Sangha welcomed the mayor with a tour of the new premises before introducing her to health care assistants and running through the history of Nurse Plus and goals for the future.

Dilip said: "We were honoured to have the Mayor of Sandwell join us to celebrate the grand opening of our West Bromwich branch. The mayor has worked for various charities in Sandwell supporting people with disabilities. I was very grateful to introduce her to our company and share with her the plans that we have to expand our healthcare services within the area."

Following the ribbon cutting, the mayor enjoyed a specially baked 'Nurse Plus' cake and spoke to the Nurse Plus team about what they enjoyed most about their roles.

Councillor Webb said: "I was pleased to be invited to the launch of the Nurse Plus Branch in West Bromwich.

"There is such a need in the provision of the services they provide within Sandwell due to the increasing elderly population and the need for their services by people with mobility problems. I would like to thank them in investing in Sandwell and wish them every success".

Nurse Plus was established in 2005 by a group of experienced healthcare and recruitment experts. For further information go to www.nurseplusuk.com

# Yoga classes take place at library

WEEKLY yoga classes will be happening at Oldbury Library.

They will take place every Thursday from 4pm to 5pm and it will cost £2.50 a session.

Sessions will give visitors the chance to gain all round body relaxation as well as learning breathing techniques.

# Fast and Furious dangers are driven home to young

**YOUNG male drivers are being warned to not drive so Fast and Furious by the fire service which has created its own film based on the Hollywood blockbuster.**

West Midlands Fire has issued the warning on a billboard at a busy junction as part of a project to cut the number of fatalities on the roads.

According to the service and the billboard, which is at the junction of Cuckoo Road and Lichfield Road in Birmingham, six people have died in the Birmingham east area in the last six months alone.

## Dangers

Now, the service has created its own short film to warn people of driving dangers, inspired by Fast and Furious 8 which was released in cinemas on April 12.

The hard-hitting ad is being shown in Cineworld based on Broad Street, Birmingham, and at VUE, StarCity. It is designed to drive home to young male drivers the very real dangers faced by them and their friends when they get behind the wheel.

It comes just days after a 22-year-old Birmingham student admitted driving dangerously after seeing Fast and the Furious 7, seriously injuring three of his friends.

Arron Lennon, of the road casualty reduction team, said the Birmingham City Council-backed campaign would reach a group of drivers known to be more vulnerable on the roads.

He said: "Young male drivers are more likely to be involved in collisions, so we're asking them to leave the fantasy world when they leave the cinema and focus instead on the very real dangers they face behind the wheel. We've produced the cinema advert ourselves. The screens will be packed over Easter and the following week, so it's a great opportunity for us to meet and engage with young drivers."

It is estimated that two million motorists will see the message, including 400,000 young drivers.

The service's film crew Photo: Jemma Graham

The billboard, which is at the junction of Cuckoo Road and Lichfield Road in Birmingham

Scott Hodge with Arron Lennon at Cineworld, Birmingham

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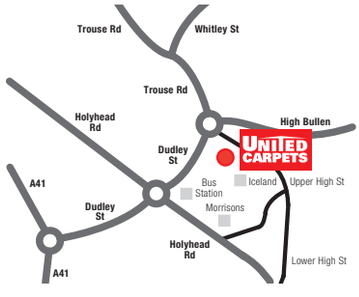

Charles Pelham Villiers at his desk

Avid Wolves fan and historian Professor Roger Swift

Villiers statue at Snow Hill, where it stood originally

Charles Pelham Villiers as a young man

# New book aims to put the record straight on longest-serving MP

**HE served under 20 different prime ministers and remains the longest-serving MP in British history.**

But the reputation of Charles Pelham Villiers, who represented Wolverhampton at Westminster for 63 years, became tarnished by a claim that he had never visited his constituency.

A new book, the first biography to be written on the distinguished parliamentarian, aims to set the record straight and restore his good name. Author Roger Swift, Wolverhampton-born Professor Emeritus of Victorian Studies at the University of Chester, said: "His story needed to be told."

Villiers, born in 1802, became a revered figure, not only in Wolverhampton but across the country after becoming involved in many of the great issues of the Victorian era. He was a staunch Liberal, who played a big role in the Anti Corn Law League as its parliamentary champion, introduced an important series of Poor Law reforms whilst a cabinet minister under Palmerston and

## MEMORY LANE

By Marion Brennan

Russell, and later split with William Gladstone over the issue of Irish Home Rule.

An aristocrat from a privileged background, he spent much of his life trying to improve the condition of the working classes. He turned down both a knighthood and a peerage because he was not interested in titles, and it would also have meant him going to the Lords, when the House of Commons was the natural home of this pragmatic politician, says Professor Swift.

There were a couple of reasons he wanted to write the book, not least being the connection with his home town, where he attended Heath Town Junior and Highfields Secondary School. As a Wolves season ticket holder, the amiable academic remains in contact with regular trips to Molineux.

But there were more pressing issues. "Villiers is something of a neglected figure in Victorian history – and he certainly doesn't deserve to be," he says. "He was a distinguished parliamentarian with an iconic status and yet this is the first biography on him. Secondly, he acquired something of a difficult reputation among local historians who give the false impression that he didn't visit Wolverhampton.

"Although this is true after 1875, largely because he suffered from chronic ill health by then, in fact he visited regularly, not just at election time but socially, and when he became too infirm, he kept in weekly contact with local Liberals by letter.

### Charities

"He was a patron of several local societies and charities, and enjoyed attending Wolverhampton races. He was also in regular touch with the local party, and members often went down to see him in London. He endeared himself to the local population. Had he not, he wouldn't have been returned so often. So the impression that he was uninterested in Wolverhampton is totally false."

Villiers, who lived in London, stood as a candidate for the seat in 1835 when outgoing Liberal MP, Richard Fryer, recommended him as someone with a glowing and growing reputation as a radical reformer.

Professor Swift says: "In many ways, he was the most difficult member of the family. His brother was Foreign Secretary in the same cabinet. Both were Liberals, whose parents were traditionally Tory, but Charles was much more radical.

"His radicalism endured throughout the 1840s and 1850s. He was involved in the repeal of the Corn Laws, education reform, the anti-slavery movement, factory reform, and in later years, votes for women, which was not a popular view to take but Villiers stood his ground and supported it. He opposed Home Rule for Ireland, wanting to maintain the union. The Liberal Party split over the issue, which saw the creation of the Liberal Unionists by Joseph Chamberlain, and Villiers was part of that movement."

Villiers died in 1898 leaving £350,000 – or £35 million by modern standards – bequeathing the equivalent of £100,000 to Wolverhampton charities. A statue of him paid out of public funds was erected originally outside the Agricultural Hall in Snow Hill and later moved to West Park.

# Tuning up for free festival

**A DAY-LONG music event is to return to Wolverhampton this summer after proving a hit last year.**

The Enjoy Wolverhampton Live! mini-festival featured acts such as Katrina of the Waves and T'Pau's Carol Decker last time out, drawing thousands of people into the city centre, where a stage was set up in Queen Square.

This year groups booked include Toploader, who had a worldwide hit with Dancing in the Moonlight and The Hoosiers, one of the top live bands on the indie-pop circuit.

Reality show stars Lucy Spraggan, who was an X Factor finalist, and Kevin Simm – the winner of last year's The Voice – will also perform.

Enjoy Wolverhampton Live! will take place on Saturday, June 3. Headline act The Hoosiers are best known for hits including Goodbye Mr A, Cops and Robbers and Worried About Ray.

### Revellers

Groups will play live on an outdoor stage to a packed audience in the city centre. The event, organised by Wolverhampton BID and funded by city centre businesses, will include an evening outdoor concert from 6-10pm.

Entrance will be free and several thousands people are expected to attend.

Wednesfield North councillor Phil Bateman said the event was a showcase for the city. He said: "This is about showing Wolverhampton as more than just a place to work and live – but also to enjoy these sort of occasions to lift morale in the city.

"It will be great for businesses in the city centre and helps to put us on the map for day visits. That has to be seen to be good for everyone that has an interest in the city. This will appeal to people from across the Black Country and beyond and I think we should actually do more of them. Wolverhampton is on the up and is really starting to lift itself."

Families will also be able to take advantage of an exciting daytime line-up of fun and entertainment. CBeebies favourite Swashbuckler's Cook and Line will be bringing the laughs in a trio performance for the kids. Children's entertainment and a fun puppet show will make it a family event to remember.

Hosted by Dickie Dodd and the Signal 107 FM Roadshow, the family fun will be running from noon-4pm.

There will food and drink stalls.

It is hoped it will become a permanent fixture. It builds on the success of the 80's Fun Fest last year which attracted thousands to a family fun day with Mr Bloom and an evening music concert featuring 80's stars including Sonia, Jaki Graham and Nathan Moore from Brother Beyond.

For more information on the days events and the performing artists, visit www.enjoywolverhampton.com

Lucy Spraggan performing at the Buttermarket in Shrewsbury

The Hoosiers perform at The Civic, Wolverhampton

Toploader frontman Joseph Washbourn and bassist Matt Knight.

# While they do their GCSE revision, do some homework for them!

**This Easter, while your son or daughter is revising for GCSEs, why not do some research on how they can get to university? They could study for a diploma or A Levels in the next two years, and they could go to college, sixth form college or stay at school. But what is right for them? We offer a choice of routes that can take your son or daughter to university:**

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# Regeneration takes a major step forward

ONE of the largest city centre regeneration opportunities in Europe has taken a major step forward following the appointment of leading real estate company Cushman & Wakefield to draw up the master plan for a Birmingham site.

The city council has appointed the company to lead the development of the 14-hectare Smithfield market site, home of the city's wholesale market.

The vision for Birmingham Smithfield is for a landmark, sustainable, mixed use development including a family and leisure hub. It will include a vibrant market and leisure hub, supported by independent retailers, restaurants and hotels, a lively public square, a wide pedestrian boulevard allowing people to easily access other parts of the city, integrated public transport and a residential neighbourhood offering modern, sustainable homes in a green setting.

Cushman & Wakefield will be working to evolve the plan with Birmingham City Council and launching the search for a delivery partner.

Designated an enterprise zone in 2012, the regeneration of the site will act as a catalyst for the transformation of Birmingham's wider Southern Gateway Area.

Development of the site is expected to deliver over 300,000 sq metres of new floor space, 2,000 new homes and 3,000 new jobs and an investment value of more than £500 million.

The current wholesale city market will be relocated to The Hub in Witton later this year, a purpose-built facility specifically designed to meet the requirements of the UK's largest combined wholesale food market.

David Tonks, head of Cushman & Wakefield's Birmingham office, said: "The Smithfield market site is one of the key regeneration opportunities in Europe and a rare chance to rejuvenate 14 hectares of land within the heart of the city centre. The site is well placed to capitalise on the rich history of the area with close proximity to the city's world class retail offer, the creative and knowledge hub and the future High Speed 2 terminus.

"This is an exciting time for Birmingham which is currently experiencing an unprecedented period of change."

# Ladies on track for smartening up their stations

TWO Birmingham women are showing their pride in the city and supporting their railway by greening up not just one but two London Midland stations.

Vivienne Wilkes and Diane Shirley, from Hall Green, joined London Midland's Adopt a Station scheme in 2016, adopting Yardley Wood station on the Snow Hill route.

Viv Wilkes, London Midland's Ian Taylor, and Diane Shirley

Thanks to their endeavours, the garden plots at the entrance to each platform were transformed with shrubs and spring bulbs.

Now the expert gardening duo and long-time friends, who are also volunteer gardeners at Sarehole Mill, have turned their attention to the next stop on the line, Hall Green, and have created a pretty wildflower garden on Platform 2.

The plants, sponsored by London Midland, include yarrow, calendula and yellow daisy, and will provide a colourful welcome for customers as well as helping to sustain bees and birds.

To recognise Vivienne and Diane's support for the stations, Ian Taylor, London Midland's customer service manager for Dorridge/Stratford Lines, met them at Hall Green to present them with two engraved 'Adopt a Station' plaques, which will be installed at each station.

Brenda Lawrence, London Midland's head of route for Snow Hill services, said: "Vivienne and Diane are great examples of the pride and commitment shown by our adopters and we are delighted to have them as part of the London Midland team."

# Legal expenses bid by chamber

THE Black Country Chamber of Commerce has a new and improved legal expenses insurance package for members. This new cover started last week and has already been well-received by local businesses.

Mark Timmins, managing director at Timmins Whittaker, said: "Going back to when we first partnered with the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, we knew that whilst the previous Members Legal Expenses policy had provided vital support to local businesses in the past, there was room for improvement that we could address."

Corin Crane, chief executive of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, added: "I would encourage everyone to take some time to see what they now get for free as part of the Chamber membership."

For more information regarding the new service, contact the Black Country Chamber of Commerce on 0330 024 0820 or visit www.blackcountrychamber.co.uk

## Thousands turn out to mark most significant day in Sikh history

Vaisakhi celebrations drew thousands to Walsall town centre

The streets were alive with colour as worshippers gathered

The Dudley procession *Photo: West Midlands Police*

# Streets bathed in brightness as Vaisakhi parades take place

This youngster is getting into the spirit of the special day

Youngsters are held aloft amid all the noise and celebrations

Swords also play a part in the ritual of the occasion

Traditional flags are carried as music is played

**Thousands of Sikh worshippers celebrated Vaisakhi with colourful processions through the Black Country.**

Report by Jamie Brassington
*jamie.brassington@expressandstar.co.uk*

Between 4,000 to 5,000 people were expected to take part in the Walsall procession marking the religious festival which dates back hundreds of years.

Worshippers turned the streets bright orange as they made their way from the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sahib Walsall temple, on West Bromwich Street, to Nanaksar Gurdwara temple, on Wellington Street, and Pleck and Darbar Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji temple, on Rollingmill Street.

Drummers led the procession, as is tradition, and they were followed by sword bearers, Khalsa flag bearers and a float carrying the Sikh holy book, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Amardeep Mahal, aged 25, from Walsall, who helped to organise the procession, said the day was about 'getting the community together and celebrating the birth of the Khalsa'.

She added: "It is also to converse the main concepts of Sikhism. Everyone is welcome to take part regardless of where they come from or who they are.

"The procession was really good. Lucky the weather held off too."

The celebration marks the anniversary of the initiation of the first five members of the brotherhood of the Khalsa on April 13, 1699 – one of the most significant dates in Sikh history – as well as ushering in spring.

Councillor Allah Ditta, who represents Palfrey ward, praised the work of the Sikh community.

He added: "I think it is very nice that all the community can come together – as part of the festival. The Sikh community do very well to integrate all societies."

The colours of Vaisakhi are traditionally orange and yellow. They represent the spirit of rebirth and sacrifice of the Khalsa, but the colours also represent joy and celebration.

Meanwhile there were similar scenes across the Black Country in Blakenhall, Wolverhampton which has hosted the celebration for more than two decades and through Dudley town centre.

In Wolverhampton, it started at 9am with a prayer service before thousands of worshippers began to assemble outside the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara on Duncan Street. They set off from the temple at 11.30am and carried on the procession for nearly two hours taking in Baggot Street, Bromley Street, Dudley Street and Wolverhampton Road among a host of other avenues. The event eventually came to a close around 3pm.

The city has already hosted vibrant celebrations with thousands taking part at the event at the Gurdwara in Well Lane, Wednesfield on Sunday, April 9.

And things are set to continue over the coming weeks.

Today, Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden was set to host the celebrations in Parliament from the Speakers' State Rooms.

He will be joined by pupils from The British Sikh School on Wolverhampton Road East. They will be performing a 'Kirtan' – a special performance of hymns from the holy book the Guru Granth Sahib.

On Sunday, May 14, there will be an all-day event at West Park.

# Delight as nature reserve wins £10k grant

Volunteers and staff at Leasowes Nature Reserve are celebrating following a successful application for a £10,000 lottery grant.

The grant will finance work to the Priory Pool, which has already seen significant improvements being made by the Friends of The Leasowes over the last four years.

The 'Awards4all' grant will enable the team to install an access platform for educational and recreational activities and will buy a number of new plants that will go in and around the pool to help improve diversity of its wildlife habitat.

A floating island for nesting wildfowl and sheltering fish will be installed and three protected water pens will be created to help establish aquatic plants such as water lilies and to provide space for spawning fish.

Judy Hill, volunteer at the nature reserve, said: "It's always lovely to see people out and about and enjoying all the aspects of the nature reserve. It's very beautiful and the money will be put to good use which will benefit all of the wildlife and visitors.

"I'm sure the work will be very appreciated."

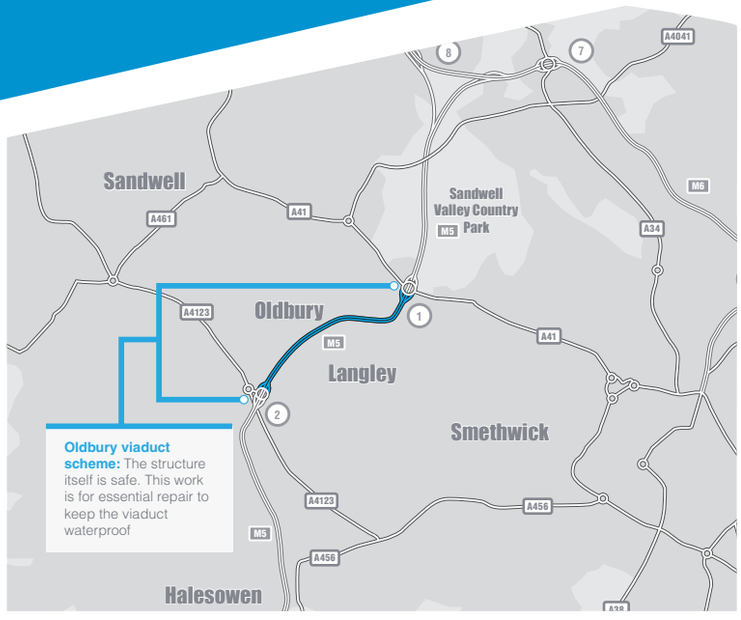
Dudley Council has also pledged to undertake tree pruning around the pool to increase light levels and path resurfacing from the car park to the pool to improve accessibility.

Marianne Diller from the Friends of The Leasowes, said: "We're working with Dudley Council to make some really exciting improvements to the pool and this grant will help us to improve its biodiversity."

Alan Lunt, Dudley Council's strategic director for place, said: "Dudley Council is delighted to be working with volunteers from the friends group to maintain and improve the beautiful green space of The Leasowes and this grant will make a huge difference to our educational and conservational activities at Priory Pool."

# Oldbury Viaduct – M5 junctions 1-2 Major roadworks start after Easter.

## If you use this road, your journey will be affected.




**After Easter, Highways England will be starting a major concrete repair and waterproofing scheme on the M5 Oldbury Viaduct between junctions 1 and 2.**

The structure of the viaduct is safe but intervention is required now to repair the damaged sections in order to prevent bigger challenges and further disruption in the future. Once complete, customers will benefit from a safer and more resilient route.

To keep this vital route open we will be using different phases of traffic management starting with a reduction to 3 narrow lanes and 40mph speed limit between junctions 1 and 2. We will do everything possible to plan and manage our roadworks to keep traffic moving. However there will be some disruption to the M5 and routes leading into and out of these junctions.

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- **car share**
- **work from home**
- **avoid rush hour**

**For more information:**
**visit www.highways.gov.uk/Oldburyviaduct**

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# How to race ahead to success in showroom

## ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips

**LOVE it or hate it, the Grand National gripped the nation last weekend so I thought it timely to take a look at some racing memorabilia.**

Collectable items range from photographs and prints to racehorse models and trophies, all produced to celebrate a famous race or the success of a famous horse or jockey.

There are of course certain names to look out for in terms of horses – we all remember Grand National stalwart Red Rum and Cheltenham Gold Cup winner Desert Orchid and (going back a few years) Arkle and Nijinsky – and those of legendary jockeys such as Lester Piggott, Jonjo O'Neill and Frankie Dettori.

Autographed photographs and race guides are very popular, some guides will have been signed by all jockeys taking part in a particular race which makes them extra special – especially if some of the jockeys are well-known nationally and internationally.

Many collectors are on the lookout for Beswick racehorse models, the really popular ones are of the greats like Arkle and Red Rum but you can also find The Minstrel and Grundy, amongst others.

One of the first Beswick horses produced was of Derby winner Bois Rousse, modelled by Arthur Gredington.

The list of racing collectables is extensive, also sought after are metal 'members' badges, race cards, race entrance tickets and even items of jockey's clothing, such as racing silks.

Trophies are very collectable. Those dating back many years and presented at famous races can sell for huge amounts at auction – one won at the 1767 Richmond Cup made more than £122,000 at a London auction.

Paintings and prints can similarly command some high prices in the saleroom, depending on the age, subject and artist . . . look out for a Stubbs!

And if you went to the Grand National on Saturday make sure you keep your programme – it may well be a collectable for future generations.

• Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.

• The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, on Tuesday, June 6. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day.New sale bidders are advised to attends the saleroom early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.

• Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

# Clothing gender divide is growing over time

Frilly whites – the New Romantic style

## STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis

I HAVE been asked to model in a forthcoming fashion show for an ex-student of mine.

I have to admit to feelings of apprehension, at my age I would have thought my catwalk days were over (*sniggers*) but the idea is to have fun so I am happy to give it a go!

Matt Gyde is a very talented young designer who is producing a range of gender free clothing, no specific masculine or feminine look, no discrimination.

His garments suit both sexes in their shape, colour and the fabrics used, visit www.mattgyde.co.uk to see more "clothing that lets you be who you are".

It has made me ponder this idea further. Originally known as "unisex" a relatively new term, first used in a publication in 1968 and defined as garments considered appropriate for either gender in western society.

In the 1970s jeans shops sold various designs but in a range of sizes suitable for men and women, there was no difference in fit, only style, waist size and leg length and then in the 80s the man's suit was worn by women, tightly gathered at the waist with a belt and the sleeves rolled up to show a colourful lining.

Loose fit jumpers and smart shirts completed the look….it was a time when we could share clothing with our other half, hair and make-up trends were also common to both sexes. Later there was much publicity around David Beckham and his sarong.

Pop stars of these generations wore elaborate costume, lycra and glitz, styling flaunted by their avid followers, regardless of their gender, Bay City Rollers, David Bowie and Boy George to name but a few.

Punk and New Romantic clothing was totally genderless. Remember the short tartan skirts over bondage trousers and frilly white shirts?

Sadly we have not come any further forward over the years, in fact our high street shops completely split the male and female departments, pretty dresses for the ladies and dark printed canvas jackets for the men, even the décor is designed to suit one or the other, and however used we are to seeing ladies in trousers, we have not yet overcome the sight of men in skirts. The closest "unisex" garments we see today are sports clothing such as sweats, t-shirts, fleece, trainers and the kilt.

### Divide

Vivienne Westwood created a range of clothing designed to be worn by both sexes in 2014 and continues to break the mould.

Today we seem to be moving further from gender neutral, the divide even wider with the popularity of men's beards and elaborate jewellery and make up for women. What goes around comes around and I'm sure we will see a revival of the shared clothing trends. What in your partner's wardrobe will you borrow?

**Visit www.jflexclusive.com, www.jflgarmentsolutions.co.uk**

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# Young should look out for signs of terrible disease

Report by Abi Jackson

**BOWEL cancer may be much rarer in younger people, but it does happen – and a lack of awareness can have devastating effects.**

Nearly 98 per cent of people will survive bowel cancer if it's detected at stage 1, a figure that drops to 10 per cent if diagnosed at stage 4.

Awareness campaigns, plus the NHS screening programmes for people aged 55 and 60-plus, mean generally, the prognosis has improved for older age groups, those most likely to get the disease (about 94 per cent of the 41,200 people diagnosed with bowel cancer every year in the UK are over 50s).

But the number of younger people with bowel cancer has increased by 45 per cent since 2004. There are currently more than 2,500 new cases a year in the UK in under 50s – and they are much more likely to be diagnosed late.

According to Bowel Cancer UK, three out of five will be diagnosed with cancer that's already stage 3 or 4. A third (34 per cent) only find out they have cancer in an emergency situation because symptoms have reached a crisis point – despite the fact they may have been seen a doctor numerous times.

Mark and Beth Lyson recall how their daughter Hannah – the 20-year-old who amassed thousands of followers when she blogged about fighting bowel cancer, before passing away in January this year – was "back and forth to the doctor" for years.

At first diagnosed with an inflamed gut, later in 2013, her GP said she probably had irritable bowel syndrome [IBS], the common, benign condition associated with a range of digestive symptoms. Hannah was prescribed medications to help with chronic constipation and worsening back pain, but no tests were carried out.

"The main thing she went back with was her back, she was always complaining about her back," says Beth, 55. "Then in August 2015, she went to Florida with her boyfriend and was sick a few times. We thought perhaps it was something she was eating, because of the doctor saying it was irritable bowel."

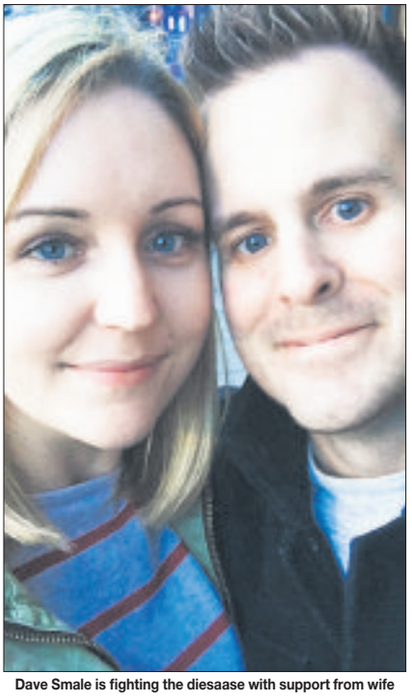
But the vomiting continued, on and off. "She'd be sick for a day, then she'd go a couple of weeks and be fine, then she'd be sick again," says Beth.

The tipping point came when summer 2016 approached. "Hannah was due to go to Camp America last June, and we were getting frightened that she couldn't go, she was in that much pain," explains Mark.

Beth took Hannah to see an on-call GP, and pleaded that tests be done to make sure she was well enough for her trip to the US.

All they wanted was reassurance it was safe to allow their daughter to jet off to America. But two weeks later, in May 2016, Beth and Mark found out that their sporty, Disney-loving 19-year-old girl, who didn't drink, didn't smoke – didn't fit any of the at-risk categories – had a tumour in her bowel, and four tumours in her liver.

Hannah Lyson blogged about fighting bowel cancer before she died in Janu-



Dave Smale is fighting the diesaase with support from wife

"She already had her case packed for America, she was that organised," recalls Mark. "She had her T-shirts, shorts, flip-flops and all these things. The case was in the conservatory with name tags on it... It was devastating."

### Shocked

Even the doctors were shocked, saying it was the youngest case they'd ever seen. But looking back, Beth and Mark, from Burscough, Lancashire, can see that opportunities to discover the cancer sooner were missed.

"Bowel cancer in younger patients is becoming more common – we don't really know why," says Willie Hamilton, professor of primary care diagnostics at the University of Exeter Medical School.

What he and his colleagues – who've teamed up with Bowel Cancer UK's Never Too Young Campaign, Durham University and University Hospital of North Tees – are certain of, is that more can be done to ensure young people with bowel cancer get diagnosed as early as possible.

Based on research, they're launching a new risk assessment tool, published in the British Journal Of General Practice and funded by the Department of Health, designed to help GPs identify when symptoms in the under-50s might indicate a serious bowel condition, including cancer or inflammatory bowel diseases like Crohn's, as opposed to more common conditions like IBS.

A scoring system will indicate whether the GP should simply monitor how the symptoms progress, recommend tests such as checking stool samples for signs of inflammation, or refer somebody for an urgent colonoscopy or to a specialist.

Systems like this level out the playing field too, as often symptoms can be vague, plus the severity of symptoms doesn't always reflect the seriousness of the underlying cause.

For Dave Smale, 36, who was diagnosed with stage 4 bowel cancer this January, the only symptom was stomach pain. "He started getting stomach pains, which correlated with when he'd been eating," explains his wife Katie, 31. "We later found out this was because everything was trying to come past the tumour in his bowel, it was obstructing everything. But at the time, we were racking our brains about what it could be. We thought perhaps it could be a food intolerance, or IBS."

That's what Dave's GP thought too at first. But a few months on, the pain became severe, and Dave was referred for tests. He was told he could be facing a diagnosis of Crohn's disease, but the results were far worse – cancer, that had spread to his liver and stomach lining.

Dave's already had major bowel surgery and is currently undergoing chemo, with more surgeries to come. Life's been turned upside down for the couple, but their 15-month-old daughter, Maisie, is keeping them laughing and little things, like pre-chemo date nights, plus support from family and friends is helping.

Katie's grateful Dave persisted with going back to the doctor, and says: "I think he'd started Googling about how people had been misdiagnosed with IBS and it turned out to be something worse."

# Joining forces to clean graves of war heroes

HARDWORKING students are celebrating a job well done after locating and restoring graves of war heroes.

More than 70 students from City of Wolverhampton College on a range of public service courses were personally thanked by Major Sylvia Parkin, deputy lieutenant of the West Midlands, at a special presentation ceremony at the college's Wellington Road campus.

Under the guidance of personnel from 4th Battalion The Mercian Regiment, the students spent a week cleaning headstones and removing weeds from the graves of servicemen and women at Bilston Cemetery, Merridale Cemetery, St John's Church and St Michael and All Angels Church burial ground in Tettenhall. The project, named Exercise Eagle Learner, formed part of the students' course, but also aimed to broaden their understanding of the impact of war and sacrifice with a local perspective.

Major Parkin said: "I have been most impressed by the work done by the students. It has been a superb project and I congratulate all of them on what they have achieved."

The activity forms part of the Armed Forces Community Covenant, a pledge of mutual support between the city and its Armed Forces community. The Covenant aims to encourage all citizens to support the local Armed Forces community.

Clean-up – from left, Jamie Case, Chelsea Davies, Corporal Wilson, Chloe Painter, Rebecca Marshall

# New bus payment is just the ticket

A BUS company which operates across the West Midlands has invested £600,000 for a new ticketing system that is expected to benefit passengers and reduce fraud.

Diamond Bus has forged a deal with UK-based company Ticketer which will see new ticket machines equipped with the latest technology which is set to go 'live' on vehicles this week.

The investment means that passengers will be offered a range of new features, including Contactless payment.

Any ticket up to the value of £30 can be bought via a Contactless payment bank card through the new ticket machines, making Diamond the first bus operator in the region to offer the on-bus form of payment.

As well as offering the customer a more convenient way to pay, the new technology will speed up bus journey times because passengers will spend less time buying a ticket when they board. Tickets will be printed with individual codes and scanned when boarding the bus.

# Highs and the lows on region's green index

**A NEW green index ranks West Midlands best for bus use and green spaces, but worst on energy efficiency and recycling**

By Marion Brennan

New Green City Regions Index compares the performance of the West Midlands with the five other city regions electing new metro mayors next month.

The ratings list, published by leading environmental organisations Campaign for Better Transport, the National Trust, The Wildlife Trusts, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and Green Alliance measures the city regions against a range of green indicators, such as air quality and green infrastructure, as well as sustainable housing and transport.

The West Midlands performs better than other regions on sustainable transport, being best on bus use, with 95 journeys per person each year, and has the lowest number of vehicle miles travelled per person per year (2,891m)

## Challenges

It also has the second highest spend on open spaces, after Liverpool city region, at £22 per person per year.

But it faces a number of green challenges on energy efficiency, ranking bottom, with only only 27 per cent of homes build, sold or let in 2016 having an energy performance certificate of A, B or C.

The West Midlands has the worst recycling rate of all the city regions at 32 per cent and has the second highest number of deaths attributable to long-term exposure to particulate matter among the big six. All the regions were found to be breaching air quality limits for toxic nitrogen dioxide.

The index also noted that a third of the West Midlands' water bodies are rated 'poor' or 'bad', the second worst performance out of the city regions.

Stephen Joseph, chief executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: "The West Midlands has shown that it is well-placed to deliver a first class integrated transport network, connecting people to local services and jobs and embracing smart technology to improve travel choice.

"The challenge for the new mayor is to develop a comprehensive, sustainable transport offer across the region, cleaning up the lethal and illegal levels of air pollution and moving away from damaging car dependent developments.

"By using new planning and transport powers to the full, the new city region mayor can deliver a high quality, low carbon future for the West Midlands."

# Just Grand! Sponsor deal for theatre booth

A WOLVERHAMPTON-based health cash plan provider has sponsored a booth at the city's Grand Theatre.

Paycare has signed a three-year sponsorship deal with the theatre and they will sponsor the Phipps VIP booth in the newly-refurbished Dress Circle.

The booth is named after CJ Phipps, the architect who designed the Grand in the 1890s. It is available for private hire by patrons on performance days. First established in Wolverhampton in 1874, Paycare is a not-for-profit organisation which helps individuals, families and businesses protect themselves against everyday healthcare costs and bills.

Kevin Rogers, Paycare Chief Executive, said: "Paycare and the Grand Theatre have both been serving the city since Victorian times and we see this as an important investment in the history of Wolverhampton. The Grand Theatre is an iconic building in the city. By sponsoring the Phipps VIP booth, we are recognising the talent of a celebrated architect."

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Flying Officer Tommy Tinsey, DFC, while filming at RAF Rednal

The Gladiator on display at Cosford appeared in a 1943 movie filmed in Shropshire

Borradaile checking the camera in the tail of a Wellington bomber

# Mystery of lost war film

Report by Toby Neal

**TWISTING and turning in the skies, these biplanes were the stars of a movie created by some of the greatest talents of the golden age of cinema, bringing home the drama and heroism of an epic and largely forgotten aerial battle.**

Based at a Shropshire airfield, the film crew overcame technical challenges and unexpected dangers – such as being fired at by friendly anti-aircraft artillery – to shoot spectacular aerial footage.

And almost 75 years later, one of those movie stars has made a return to Shropshire, looking as good as new. It is Gloster Gladiator serial number K8042, one of a number of biplanes that were used in the making of the movie Signed With Their Honour. It is a recent arrival at the RAF Museum at Cosford.

Signed With Their Honour was based on a book of that name by Australian war correspondent James Aldridge, which told the story of the air war in Greece in 1941, when a handful of outdated Gloster Gladiators fought the might of the Luftwaffe in a six week delaying action until the single British squadron was wiped out.

To take part in the movie, experienced RAF pilots were given a "rest holiday" after two or three years' of continuous operational flying. Among them was a decorated Gladiator pilot who had been in the thick of the battle during the Greece campaign.

For taking to the skies above Shropshire to recreate the aerial conflict, they received no extra pay, the filming all being considered part of their rest cure.

What a fitting backdrop that footage would make for the Gladiator now on display at Cosford, having been moved there from the RAF Museum in London.

"A mob of drinkers - and real fellows" - that's how Bordie captioned this picture of film crew and pilots at RAF Rednal

"Director Vernon Sewell tells us what to do – we just smile," is the caption Bordie – in the rear seat of the Tiger Moth – has written in his album

Squadron Leader Richard Acworth, DFC, had previously flown Gladiators in battle

## Footage

Alas, there is a great, unsolved mystery. For after the aerial scenes were in the can, filming was cancelled indefinitely. The movie was never finished and nobody knows what happened to the footage that was shot by the team which had arrived at RAF Rednal, a Spitfire training base near Oswestry, in the autumn of 1943.

Maybe it lies undiscovered in some archive or private collection? Or maybe, and perhaps most probably, it was binned, and has been lost forever?

We can however bring you some rare images taken during the filming, which are in an album which was compiled by the cameraman on the project, the late Osmond Borradaile.

"Bordie" was a renowned cinematographer who worked on films such as The Four Feathers and Scott of the Antarctic, and enhanced the work of the likes of Cecil B. De Mille, Alfred Hitchcock, and Otto Preminger. He has been described as "the greatest exterior camera artist in the world."

A Canadian, his son George lives in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, and has kindly emailed us his father's photographic souvenirs of that Shropshire shoot. It is conceivable that they include a photo of K8042, the Gladiator now at Cosford, although with the serial number not visible in some shots, it is impossible to be sure.

Bordie also wrote memoirs – they were compiled into the book "Life Through A Lens" by his daughter Anita Hadley – which shed light on why the film was abandoned.

An ambitious project, to his deep disappointment it ultimately fell victim to the limited resources of the day, he wrote, and he did not know what had happened to the negatives.

Neither George nor Anita, who lives in British Columbia, can shed any more light on what happened to the completed footage.

The Air Ministry had given Denham Studios the green light to make the film and co-operated by providing facilities, including aircraft and pilots. Locations around Shrewsbury were selected, with studio models built at Denham.

The producer was Paul Soskin, the director was Vernon Sewell, and the cast of "resting" RAF pilots included Squadron Leader Richard Acworth, who had won the Distinguished Flying Cross and had taken part in the original air battle over Greece, and another DFC winner, Birmingham-born Flying Officer Tommy Tinsey, who had 52 pieces of shrapnel in his legs, and had flown Spitfires in the North African campaign.

Bordie wrote in his memoirs: "A closely-knit group, the pilots became known as 'Soskin's Squadron' after the producer, Paul Soskin."

He went on: "Our pilots were a grand bunch of fellows. They had all flown at least two tours, and were assigned to us as a rest holiday. Some holiday all right!"

The exuberant pilots entered into the spirit of the production, and local townspeople must have wondered, said Bordie, about so many crash dives which left no trace of wreckage. The filming made headlines, and a story in the Daily Express of February 14, 1944, told how "in a market town in the wilds of north west England... country folk run from their cottages day after day to gaze up at the strangest series of aerial dogfights ever seen over Britain..." The town concerned was not mentioned because of censorship, but may well have been Oswestry.

Apart from the Wellington bomber – nicknamed a "Wimpy" – which had cameras in the nose, tail, and midships, two other aircraft were used as camera planes. They were a Tiger Moth two-seater biplane, using a camera swivelled by hand and operated from the open cockpit, and a 1936 Gladiator with an automatic camera clamped onto the lower wing, surrounded by hot water bottles to stop it freezing. A captured Messerschmitt was used as the "enemy."

Bordie wrote: "It did not take long for me to come to the conclusion that this was a most difficult assignment because of all the restrictions imposed on us. We would all be briefed as to the shots we wished to obtain, and warned of the balloon barrage to our east, and told that the ack-ack guns would open up on us if we approached the land from the sea. Well, by the time we got through the clouds and tried to form up to get a shot, we often were over these restricted areas. It was not nice to be fired on by our own guns."

Not long beforehand, Bordie had suffered burns when a ship on which he was filming was sunk in the Mediterranean, and in the low temperatures in the air at 18,000ft his recently-healed burns were very sensitive, so he wore a leather face mask.

"Like the other fellows, I was only glad to get back to our pub and enjoy a grog or two, and of course the laughs that followed.

"We were fortunate, for during all this show, we only lost one Glad, when the pilot made a forced landing in the hospital yard. The pilot did not need the attention of the institute, but the plane was not in such healthy shape.

"Yes, we were indeed lucky. What has happened to the footage, I do not know. A week or so after the air sequences were completed, the production was cancelled for an indefinite time."

The location of this forced landing incident appears to have been Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, on November 4, 1943, so the hospital he mentioned would have been Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital.

However, Bordie was wrong to think this was the only aircraft to have been lost, as just under three weeks later another two Gladiators were in a mid-air collision near Arddleen in Mid Wales, both pilots baling out.

## Blank

So what happened, or might have happened, to the completed footage? We went on a sleuthing trail, but ultimately drew a blank.

Tina McFarling of the British Film Institute said there was no straightforward answer to what would happen to uncompleted film.

"If a film was not completed, you have your producers, financiers, and sometimes somebody in the middle called a completion guarantor, who is the intermediary."

Generally it would be one of them who held the completed footage, although it was also possible the footage had been disposed of.

It seems though there is always a hope that it might have survived and unexpectedly turn up.

Our inquiries also took in the Rank Organisation, which turns out to have sold all film rights to Thames TV some time ago; FremantleMedia (of which Thames is now part); British Pathe; and Pinewood Studios, with which Denham Studios had merged many moons ago. Sadly, like all the others, Pinewood could find no trace of the film.

It wasn't deposited at the Imperial War Museum either.

Mr Kay Gladstone, Senior Curator, Film Archive, Acquisitions and Documentation, told us: "This was a commercial – or 'independent' production – so would never have been deposited at IWM."

He added: "In any case the rushes of commercial films which are abandoned are seldom retained, however frustrating that may subsequently be for journalists and historians interested in recalling the past."

So, Signed With Their Honour remains "missing," with only a slim hope that this movie masterpiece did not end up in the bin.

# The Ticket

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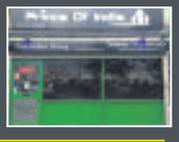
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# Comedy chaos? We'll guarantee it

BOGIES! One simple word that sums up the Saturday mornings of a generation. Now, more than 10 years later, comedy duo Dick and Dom, or Richard McCourt and Dominic Wood, are back with their live tour.

It reaches the Core Theatre in Solihull on April 22, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall on August 17 and Stafford Gatehouse on October 29.

The pair sat down with The Ticket to fill us in on what mad capers fans can expect from the show.

"Basically we split the crowd into two different teams so we have the Dick vs the Dom," says Dom.

"We play loads of different games, we bring the crowd up on stage to play games as well and then whoever wins the round gets a point for their team. Then the team with the most points wins!"

Nothing is this simple in the world of Dick and Dom – and anything can happen on their live tour, with each night promising to be different.

"We've been doing it for about five or six years now but this is the first time we've done it as a UK tour," says Dick.

"It's really good fun, it's one of those shows that has the same sort of feel as Dick and Dom in Da Bungalow with all of the chaos – you just don't know what's going to happen!"

Capers – Dick and Dom bring their live show to the Midlands

## FLASH

"We can't wait to return to the Midlands, it has great audiences. We did our last tour in Birmingham in front of thousands of people and it was really warm."

Dick and Dom are famed for their own brand of whimsical chaos on our TV screens, a style that they adapted to stage in a flash.

"We've been doing this for more than 20 years now, so a lot of the ideas now have just been crafted over time that we know work," says Dick.

"The live show Dick vs Dom is basically a culmination of everything we've done over the years in one package. We're like one big joke book, one big file of different routines, show bits, festival bits and we just put all of that together for our live shows."

With such an extensive array of kooky highlights from their career – what's their favourite?

"We really have to look back at Dick and Dom in Da Bungalow for that, that's one of our favourite things that we have ever done, and obviously it had the very famous game 'Bogies' that has stayed with the audience ever since," Dick tells us.

"Obviously that audience has grown up now and we have taken it with us when we've done university tours. It's become a classic, it was on BBC One, BBC Two and all these digital channels afterwards for people to watch."

"The 'Bogies' game just sticks, I don't know what it is with it! It channels that sort of Horrid Henry and Dennis the Menace sort of vibe that people love," Dom continues.

"We brought it back recently for Comic Relief and doing it again, as 40 year olds, was just great!

"It's funny that most children who are watching us on BBC now, when you write bogies on an autograph they have no idea why you've put it!"

Dick and Dom's career started more than 20 years ago, after years of hard work.

"At the young age of 18 I was a tea boy and a runner and I started at the bottom and worked my way up," Dick tells us.

Dom adds: "As for me, I was a jobbing magician in the south west, and I used that in a job interview and just worked really hard.

"We were then both presenters for the CBBC but we weren't comedians really, then there was this props guy who worked behind the scenes and he used to be like 'oh, here comes Dick and Dom!' and it just stuck.

"From that moment we got picked up by producer Steve Ride and he just developed our act even more and then we discovered we could just do fun things. It just came naturally, it wasn't a conscious decision by us."

From this, a whole new generation of comedy lovers was born as children tuned into their TV screens to catch a glimpse of the raucous duo.

In 2002, iconic programme Dick and Dom in Da Bungalow first aired and it was a programme that changed the duo's lives forever and led to further shows such as Diddy Movies, Dick and Dom's Hoopla, Absolute Genius and more.

*The 'Bogies' game just sticks . . . it channels that sort of Horrid Henry vibe*

"Making the Bungalow was absolutely amazing. As teenagers all we wanted to do was to become CBBC presenters but moreso, the ultimate goal was to work on Saturday morning on BBC One." Dom enthuses.

"When we eventually got the call to say they wanted us to do that, we just didn't know what to do, it was amazing. That's just half the battle, the other half is just making sure everyone loves it and thankfully we succeeded.

"We all had an absolute riot making it, every single week we were howling with laughter. Everyone there genuinely was having the best time. It led to so many amazing things afterwards, it opened so many doors."

It's not just TV Dick and Dom have mastered, they've also had stints in theatre starring in the likes of Spamalot, Aladdin and Dick Whittington.

"It's instant gratification really, you see everyone having a great time in front of you," Dick tells us.

We wonder, what's coming up for the duo?

"We can't reveal everything yet, but we do have a lot of really exciting things to look forward to!" Dom says. "We're stacked up, and we do have some absolute crackers in the works, but we just can't reveal all yet!"

Becci Stanley

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Philip Morris as Rick Braithwaite

# To Sir, With Love still has a message for us today

E.R. Braithwaite's powerful story, To Sir, With Love, is brought to life at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from Wednesday to Saturday, April 25-May 6.

Immortalised in the classic 1967 film starring Sidney Poitier, and adapted for the stage by the writer of East Is East, Ayub Khan-Din, this new production directed by Gwenda Hughes and Tom Saunders will be brought to life by a company of young performers alongside professional actors.

Following last year's sell-out run of The Rotters' Club by Birmingham Repertory Theatre's Young Rep, the young performers aged 15 to 21 from the West Midlands will take to The Rep's main stage again, alongside Philip Morris as Rick Braithwaite.

Based on E. R. Braithwaite's autobiography, To Sir, With Love is an inspirational story of courage and hope. Rick Braithwaite, a Cambridge graduate and ex-RAF fighter pilot, has fought for his country but is still fighting for acceptance. No employer wants him.

As the reality of life as a black man in post-war Britain hits him, he is forced to take a teaching post in a tough inner city school. Rick's class don't want him. The world has given up on them. But Rick knows what it's like to be ignored and isn't going to turn his back on them. This is a story about fighting prejudice with hope, set during a time of austerity, so still relevant.

On what drew him Ayub Khan-Din said "It was about reading the book and seeing what resonated. For me that was the discussion about education. Especially today, as everyone is so concerned about the way we're educating our children."

See birmingham-rep.co.uk or call 0121 236 4455.

# Kane now able to make a change

Russell Kane is a changed man. For his Right Man, Wrong Age tour, which calls at Stourbridge Town Hall on Sunday, April 30, you may encounter someone with a new look, fresh perspectives and a different approach to his comedy.

"In the last year I've been married and had a baby. I've changed my hair, I've changed my look, I've thrown all my eyeliner in the bin.

"I literally went to my wardrobe one day and got all my ridiculous clothes and took them to the Sue Ryder shop for some other man having a midlife crisis, then bought the four exact same suits in different colours from Topman.

Then I got my hair as flat as it can go and I thought, 'that's it: this is me now'."

Russell can pinpoint the exact moment when he needed to alter his outlook and write a new show. It started with somebody at the door.

"I'm always looking for the moment that can make me look ridiculous in a way that is compelling. I was in the middle of spray-tanning myself in these tiny pants when the doorbell went.

"I went downstairs in my dressing gown and this window cleaner was touting for work. He said, 'I'm really sorry to disturb you: is your mum or dad in at all?' You might have thought this was a compliment, but it's really not. He could be talking about how I'm putting myself across so I thought: 'clothes in the bin'. And at that moment, there was Right Man, Wrong Age."

In the world of stand-up, acts are continually expected to evolve and grow and turn over a significant amount of material every one or two years. For some this burden might prove too much, but for Russell Kane this is a challenge he relishes. "I'll keep changing, and I don't really ever want to stand still. I don't care if it confuses people about where I'm coming from."

His sense of gratitude for the job he's doing is palpable. "I love it. If I ever have a bad day and feel miserable, I think about the things my family have done for a living. The fact that I can go and do an hour's work on stage is incredible."

For details see www.boroughhalls.co.uk or call 01384 812812. All tickets £17.

# Sir Ken spreads a little happiness

**Veteran comedian Ken Dodd brings his Happiness Show to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre on Saturday.**

**The 89-year-old comedy legend from Liverpool remains one of the hardest working men in showbusiness, though he now mostly limits himself to weekend gigs.**

**Sir Ken's performances are famous for their epic length as the 'Squire of Notty Ash' tickles his audience with countless gags delivered in his inimitable style.**

# Bands uniting for charity concerts

Brum Bands Unite is a St George's Day celebration at Birmingham Town Hall in support of the Justice for the 21 Campaign, for the victims of the 1974 pub bombings by the IRA in the city.

Brum musical stalwarts such as Steve Gibbons, Quill, Vix and the Mischiefs (ex-Fuzzbox) and Morganisation (ex-ELO) will join Bitty McLean, Chris Tye and the Inspiration Ladies Choir on Sunday evening. Tickets cost £12.

There is another charity concert the following weekend, on Sunday, April 30, when Fudgestock 2017 is held at the Robin 2 in Bilston. The gig, from 4pm to 11pm, features six bands in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. The line up includes Phoenix Rising, Wounded Spirit, Dirty Roxx, David Young Band, Craig Patge and White Room.

# SATURDAY'S TV APRIL 22

## CHOICE

Ant & Dec

**Britain's Got Talent (ITV, 8pm)**
Another selection of would-be entertainers hope to exhilarate and amuse in equal measure, as they take to the stage to demonstrate their individual talents to judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon in the second round of the audition stage. As ever, Ant and Dec are on hand to give viewers an insight into the action backstage, and to congratulate – or comfort – the acts as they return from their moment in the limelight.

## BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** London Marathon: My Reason to Run. **1.45** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day eight at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **4.30** BBC News. **4.40** Regional Programme. **4.50** Match of the Day Live. Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off 5.15pm).

**7.20 Doctor Who.** The Doctor and Bill find themselves in a gleaming, perfect city in the far future, at the edge of the galaxy. This new settlement is said to hold the secret of human happiness, but when the pair try to make contact with the locals, all they find are piles of grinning skulls. As the Time Lord and his new travelling pal seek to solve the terrifying mystery, a sinister force stirs within the walls, and from the shadows the cute but deadly emojibots are watching. Guest starring Ralf Little, with Matt Lucas as Nardole.

**8.10 Casualty.** Part one of two. The first day of Cal's strike causes chaos for Sam, who decides to make up for staff shortages by manning the ED himself, despite his lack of experience.

**9.00 BBC News**; Weather.

**9.20 All Round to Mrs Brown's.** Agnes and the family are joined in studio by choirmaster Gareth Malone and singer Peter Andre, while Steps perform their new single Scared of the Dark in Foley's pub and Nick Knowles teams up with Dermot and Buster for their Celebrity Boat Tour adventure; National Lottery Update.

**10.20 Match of the Day.** Dan Walker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including West Ham United v Everton and Bournemouth v Middlesbrough.

**11.20 Murder in Successville.** New series. Sleet and sidekick Richard Osman wade into the art underworld to catch Bjork's killer, with Hillary Clinton, Arsene Wenger, Zayn Malik and Bill Nighy all in the frame.

**11.50 Film: Reign of Fire.** (2002) Fantasy adventure, starring Christian Bale and Matthew McConaughey.

**1.25** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.30** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.25 Film:** Tom Thumb. (1958) **7.55 Film:** That's Entertainment! (1974) **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.00** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **1.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **1.30** Live European Gymnastics Championships: Apparatus Finals. Coverage from Cluj. **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Flog It! (R)

**6.00 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby.** Giles Coren and Monica Galetti join the staff working in some of the most unusual hotels around the world. (R)

**7.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship.** Hazel Irvine introduces coverage of the final session on day eight at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where one second-round match is due to finish and another set to begin.

**8.00 BBC Young Dancer 2017.** Anita Rani and Ore Oduba are joined by celebrated ballerina Darcey Bussell as they host coverage of the grand final of this year's Young Dancer of the Year contest. Over the course of the past months, entrants for the Street Dance, Ballet, South Asian and Contemporary categories have been whittled down to five finalists, with one act representing each discipline, along with a "wildcard" entrant. Now, Royal Ballet director Kevin O'Hare, choreographers Jasmine Vardimon, Marc Brew, Kate Prince and Kenneth Tharp, and Kathak dancer Nahid Siddiqui must decide which entrant will claim the title. Last in the series.

**10.00 QI XL.** An extended edition in which Stephen Fry is joined by Sandi Toksvig, Aisling Bea, Susan Calman and regular panellist Alan Davies to navigate the topic of mathematics.

**10.45 Versailles.** A high-profile poisoning leaves a coveted vacancy, while Philippe's exiled lover Chevalier is allowed home – so a new marriage must be arranged; (R) Inside Versailles.

**11.45 Snooker: The World Championship.** Highlights of the concluding session on day eight at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where another second-round match was scheduled to conclude.

**12.35** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **2.35 Film:** Blackthorn. (2011) **4.10** This Is BBC Two.

## ITV

**6.00** CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.55** NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25 Film:** Free Willy 3: The Rescue. (1997) **11.10** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **12.10** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Tipping Point. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Ayr. Coverage from Ayr Racecourse. **4.30** Britain's Got More Talent. (R) **5.30** Catchphrase. (R)

**6.15 Regional Programme;** Weather.

**6.30 ITV News**; Weather.

**6.45 Take Me Out.** A group of men enters the "love lift" in the hope of impressing 30 single women and winning a date – but must first get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval. Paddy McGuinness presents.

**8.00 Britain's Got Talent.** More would-be entertainers hope to impress Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon in the second round of the audition stage.

**9.20 Through the Keyhole.** Keith Lemon hosts the third series of the revival of the classic game show originally presented by David Frost. Visiting three mystery celebrity homes each week, he challenges an all-star panel to guess the identities of the famous occupants based on clues highlighted along each tour and the help of the studio audience. In this edition, the Celebrity Juice funnyman is joined by celebrity chef Gino D'Acampo, Coronation Street star Sue Cleaver (Eileen Grimshaw), and comedian and actor Johnny Vegas. (R)

**10.25 ITV News**; Weather.

**10.40 Film: Bend It Like Beckham.** (2002) A schoolgirl tries to keep her passion for football a secret from her parents – but then gets the chance to turn professional. Comedy, starring Parminder Nagra and Keira Knightley.

**12.45** Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

## CHANNEL 4

**6.15** Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.45** Motor Sport: British GT. **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** Extreme Food. **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)

**6.30 Channel 4 News.**

**6.55 Making Western Flag.** A short film displaying artist John Gerrard's simulated impression of the Spindletop oil field in Texas, which was the site of the first major oil find of the Texas Oil Boom.

**7.00 Escape to the Chateau.** Fresh from the success of hosting a three-day wedding at the chateau, Dick and Angel make business plans for the grounds, intending to charge people to fish in the moat and forage in the woods. Angel starts work on a second guest suite, but also wants to install an elevator, which pushes Dick's engineering skills to the limit. (R)

**8.00 Man Made Planet: Earth from Space.** Tim Peake and some of his fellow astronauts make use of full-profile images of Earth to detail the remarkable impact human civilisation has had on the planet's landscape.

**9.00 Film: Dracula Untold.** (2014) Premiere. A Romanian knight fights to defend his homeland against Turkish invaders. Faced with overwhelming odds, he enters into a dangerous bargain to gain supernatural powers so he can drive off his enemies – but the deal could cost him his humanity as he transforms into a terrifying monster. Fantasy adventure, starring Luke Evans.

**10.45 Film: The Eagle.** (2011) A Roman centurion and his British slave journey into the wilds of Scotland to recover the standard of a lost legion. Action adventure, starring Channing Tatum and Jamie Bell.

**12.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.45** Hollyoaks. (R) **3.50** Location, Location, Location. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake! **10.20** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.55** Access. **11.00** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** On Benefits: UK's Most Hated Woman? (R) **1.15** On Benefits: Desperately Seeking Stardom. (R) **2.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **3.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords: Revisited 2. (R) **5.10** Can't Pay Special: Big Family Bust Up. (R)

**6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** The agents try to recover more than £12,000 owed by a jeweller to one of his suppliers, but as the tension mounts, the debtor violently lashes out at one of the officers. Meanwhile, agents in London chase up more than £5,000 owed by a tenant to her former landlord for rent arrears, and also attempt to retrieve over £6,000 owed by a property developer. (R)

**7.10 NCIS: Los Angeles.** The team is forced to establish whether the gunning down of a man outside the Vietnamese Consulate is an isolated incident or a terrorist attack.

**8.00 NCIS.** The agents quickly close a seemingly cut-and-dried case, but as they all leave the office at the end of the day, they each begin to spot flaws in their investigation.

**8.55 5 News Weekend.**

**9.00 Football on 5: The Championship.** George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Burton Albion v Leeds United and Sheffield Wednesday v Derby County.

**10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush.** George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in League One and Two.

**10.30 The Funny Side of Growing Up.** Johnny Vegas and a variety of well-known British stars take an irreverent look back at the process of growing into adulthood.

**11.30 Comedy Bigmouths with Rory Bremner.** Ian Stone takes aim at current affairs of the past seven days, with help from Zoe Lyons, Geoff Norcott and Jo Caulfield.

**12.00** SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Creep. (2004) **4.35** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **5.00** Access.

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four**
**7.00** Dan Cruickshank: At Home with the British **8.00** Tankies: Tank Heroes of World War II **9.00 Film:** Department Q: A Conspiracy of Faith (2016) **10.45** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.00** Sinatra: All or Nothing at All **1.55** Sings the Great American Songbook **2.55** Duets at the BBC **3.55** Close

**ITV2**
**11.55** Take Me Out **1.00** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.35 Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **2.35** FYI Daily **2.40 Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **3.30 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **4.30** FYI Daily **4.35 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **5.15 Film:** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25 Film:** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **8.25** Scorpion **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.25** Celebrity Juice **11.10** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.05 Film:** That Awkward Moment (2014) **2.05** FYI Daily **2.20 Film:** That Awkward Moment (2014) **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

**ITV3**
**11.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **1.45** An Audience with Victoria Wood **2.55** Housewife, 49 **4.55 Film:** The Queen (2006) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00 Film:** The Queen (2006) **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Lewis **1.05** Wycliffe **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

**ITV4**
**11.55** Pawn Stars **2.10** British Touring Car Championship Highlights **3.45 Film:** Shalako (1968) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50 Film:** Shalako (1968) **6.00** It's Not Rocket Science **7.00** Fierce **8.00** The Chase Celebrity Special **9.05 Film:** Patriot Games (1992) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Patriot Games (1992) **11.25 Film:** Exit Wounds (2001) **12.25** FYI Daily **12.30 Film:** Exit Wounds (2001) **1.35** Minder **2.35** Tommy Cooper **3.00** Teleshopping

**E4**
**11.30** The Goldbergs **12.30 Film:** Bridge to Terabithia (2007) **2.30 Film:** We Bought a Zoo (2011) **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** American Reunion (2012) **11.15** Gogglebox **12.50** Rude Tube: Ultimate Champions **1.55** Tattoo Fixers **2.55** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.40** Black-ish **4.00** The Mindy Project

**Film4**
**11.00** Chalet Girl (2011) **1.00** Rio 2 (2014) **3.00** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **5.05** Fantastic Four (2005) **7.10** Airplane! (1980) **9.00** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) **11.20** Dog Soldiers (2002)


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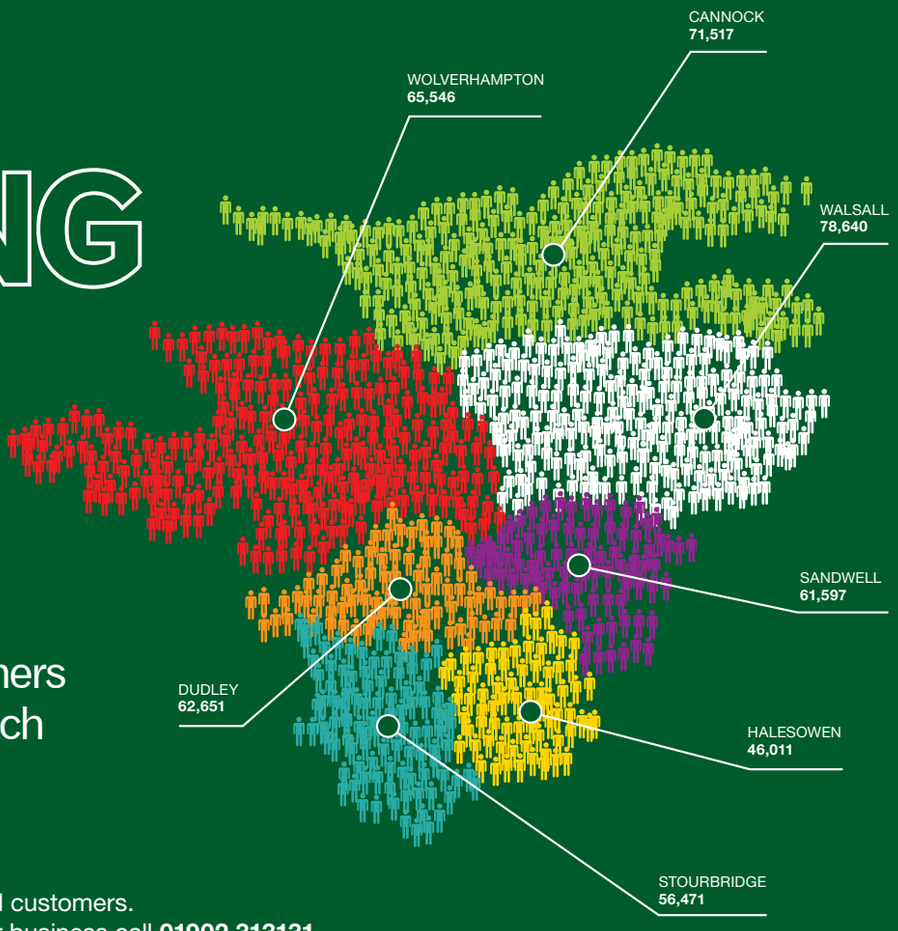


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# SUNDAY'S TV APRIL 23

## CHOICE

Robson Green (left)

**Grantchester (ITV, 9pm)**
New series. The return of the detective drama set in the 1950s, starring James Norton and Robson Green. Sidney receives a series of anonymous phone calls, which he realises may be linked to a series of murders in which the victims were all important community figures killed by someone who leaves dead birds as a grisly calling card. The threat forces Sidney to question whether he can reconcile his relationship with Amanda and his calling as a vicar. Leonard bonds with Hilary as she cares for her dying father, while Geordie's investigation of the killings leads him to a mysterious home for people with disabilities.

## BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **8.30** London Marathon. Live coverage of the 37th staging of the annual event. **3.00** BBC News; Weather. **3.15** Regional Programme. **4.30** Points of View. **4.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.15** Songs of Praise. **5.50** Pointless Celebrities. (R)

**6.35 BBC News.**

**6.50 Regional Programme.**

**7.00 Countryfile.** The team explores County Durham, where Matt Baker demonstrates how to make a traditional regional dish and Ellie Harrison takes a trip up the River Tees. Sean Fletcher meets a boy scout pack involved in wildlife projects, Tom Heap reports on fly tipping, and Adam Henson meets beef farmers who feed their cows on grass alone. Including weather for the week ahead.

**8.00 Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents the show from Senate House in Bloomsbury, Britain's oldest skyscraper and administrative centre of the University of London. Items under valuation include the hoof of a horse that fought in the Battle of Balaclava, a collection of stained glass panels that were recovered from a skip, and a diamond and platinum bracelet.

**9.00 Line of Duty.** DCI Roz Huntley struggles to allay her husband's suspicions and AC12 find a new angle to pursue their case against her in the penultimate episode of Jed Mercurio's police drama.

**10.00 BBC News.**

**10.20 Regional Programme.**

**10.30 Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, featuring Burnley v Manchester United at Turf Moor and Liverpool v Crystal Palace at Anfield.

**11.20 Match of the Day: The FA Cup.** Arsenal v Manchester City. Action from the concluding semi-final at Wembley Stadium, as the line-up for the showpiece match was confirmed.

**11.50 The Women's Football Show.** Eilidh Barbour presents a look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.

**12.30** I'm Different: Let Me Drive. **1.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.05** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.00** Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **7.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **7.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day nine at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield.

**6.00 The London Marathon Highlights.** Ore Oduba presents action from the 37th staging of the annual event, which saw tens of thousands of runners take on the famous 26.2-mile course.

**7.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship.** Jason Mohammad introduces coverage of the final session on day nine at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where two more second-round matches continue. Eight frames are scheduled to take place on both tables, with the players returning to the green baize having started their matches this morning.

**8.00 Top Gear.** Another helping of four-wheel features, including test drives and reports on the latest models, plus a celebrity taking to the show's test track in Star in a Reasonably Priced Car.

**9.00 The Crucible: 40 Golden Snooker Years.** Steve Davis goes back to the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield to celebrate 40 years of the world snooker championship, talking to some of the players forever ingrained in the sport's history. The venue has become the home of snooker since the championships moved there in 1977, helping to create memorable moments and scenes of drama that live on to this day. Featuring interviews with former champions Stephen Hendry and Dennis Taylor, six-time runner-up and fans' favourite Jimmy White, and celebrity snooker addicts Richard Osman and Stephen Fry.

**10.00 The Rack Pack.** Comedy drama based on the glory days of professional snooker in the 1980s and the rivalry between Alex "Hurricane" Higgins and Steve Davis. (R)

**11.30 Snooker: The World Championship.**

**12.20** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **2.20** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.15** Holby City. (R) **4.15** This Is BBC Two.

## ITV

**6.00** CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.55** NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00 Film:** Carry On Again Doctor. (1969) **12.45** ITV News; Weather. **12.55** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **1.55** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **3.15 Film:** You Only Live Twice. (1967) **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

**6.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Emmerdale's Natalie Anderson (Alicia), actress Patsy Kensit, broadcaster Esther Rantzen and singer-presenter Brian McFadden take on a trivia expert for charity. Bradley Walsh hosts. (R)

**7.00 Bigheads.** New series. Jason Manford hosts the comedy game show in which contestants compete in a series of bizarre physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of celebrities.

**8.00 The Durrells.** New series. Louisa tries to raise some money by selling homemade food, which attracts the attention of another Englishman. However, a former lover threatens the family's plans.

**9.00 Grantchester.** New series. Sidney receives a series of anonymous phone calls, which he realises may be linked to a series of murders in which the victims were all important community figures.

**10.00 ITV News**; Weather.

**10.20 Lethal Weapon.** When a million dollar casino heist takes a deadly turn, Riggs befriends the only credible witness – an eight-year-old boy – and takes him into his care. Clayne Crawford stars. (R)

**11.20 The Nightly Show Best Bits.** Highlights of the final week, with Dermot O'Leary presenting topical monologues, studio games, celebrity guests, stand-up and video clips. Last in the series.

**11.50 Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R)

**12.40** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. (R)

## CHANNEL 4

**6.20** The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30 Film:** Robots. (2005) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ewan McGregor. **3.20 Film:** Mission: Impossible. (1996) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise. **5.25** George Clarke's Old House, New Home. (R)

**6.30 Channel 4 News.**

**6.50 Film: Thor.** (2011) The Norse god of thunder is banished from his own world when his arrogance puts the kingdom on the brink of war. He is sent to present-day Earth, where he is forced to live among humans without his supernatural powers, but must regain his abilities to defend his new home against his evil brother. Kenneth Branagh's fantasy adventure based on the Marvel comics, starring Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston and Anthony Hopkins. Edited for language.

**9.00 The Island with Bear Grylls.** New series. The fourth series of the survival challenge takes on a new approach, featuring two teams from different generations who are marooned on separate islands to see which age group is better able to cope with hardship. The older group, led by 66-year-old Frank, get off to a good starts and soon manage to light a fire. However, the other team, under the command of its youngest member 18-year-old Freddie, get lost in the dense jungle and spend days trying to purify drinking water while suffering from exhaustion and dehydration.

**10.00 Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

**11.00 Man Made Planet: Earth from Space.** Tim Peake and some of his fellow astronauts make use of full-profile images of Earth to detail the remarkable impact human civilisation has had on the planet's landscape. (R)

**12.00 Film:** The Sessions. (2012) **1.45** The Last Leg. (R) **2.40** Location, Location, Location. (R) **3.35** Gillette World Sport. **4.00** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.25** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake!: Mr Men. **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.35** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Fireman Sam. (R) **6.55** Olly the Little White Van. **7.00** Olly the Little White Van. **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.20** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **7.45** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **7.55** Wissper. (R) **8.10** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.25** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **8.50** Little Princess. (R) **9.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.20** Access. **10.25** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.20** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.55** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.55 Film:** The Deep End of the Ocean. (1999) Drama, starring Michelle Pfeiffer. **3.00** Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild. (R) **4.00** Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild. (R) **5.00** Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild. (R)

**6.00 Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild.** As winter takes its toll, cameras follow grey seal pups at Ravenscar Beach, and the progress of many short-eared owls that land on the moors. (R)

**6.50 5 News Weekend.**

**6.55 Film: U-571.** (2000) American forces board a stricken Nazi submarine at the height of the Second World War in the hope of seizing an Enigma coding machine, but German reinforcements arrive, forcing them to flee in the unfamiliar craft. Action adventure, starring Matthew McConaughey, Harvey Keitel, Bill Paxton and Jon Bon Jovi. Edited for language. Includes 5 News Update at 7.55pm.

**9.00 Film: 3 Days to Kill.** (2014) Premiere. A CIA agent learns he is dying, and decides to quit the agency so he can spend his last few months trying to rebuild his relationship with his estranged daughter. He is tempted to go back on his word when an old colleague offers him an experimental drug that could save his life – if he agrees to carry out one last mission. Action thriller, starring Kevin Costner, Amber Heard and Hailee Steinfeld. Includes 5 News Update at 10pm.

**11.05 Film: Chaos.** (2005) Crime thriller, starring Jason Statham.

**1.05** SuperCasino. **3.10** Body of Proof. (R) **4.00** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R)

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four**
**7.00** The Sun **8.00** The Moon **9.00** Horizon: Seeing Stars **10.00** The Sky at Night **11.00** K2: The Killer Summit: Storyville **12.20** The Sun **1.25** The Moon **2.20** K2: The Killer Summit: Storyville **3.45** Close

**ITV2**
**1.00** 2Awesome **1.05** 2Awesome: Guidance **2.05** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.20** 2Awesome: Side Effects **2.55** Best of You've Been Framed! Gold **3.55** Britain's Got Talent **5.15** Britain's Got More Talent **6.15 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **7.15** FYI Daily **7.20 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.25** The Vampire Diaries **2.15** Teleshopping

**ITV3**
**11.20 Film:** Columbo: Short Fuse (1972) **12.55** Foyle's War **3.00** Our Queen at 90 **5.00** When Phillip Met Prince Philip: 60 Years of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Morecambe and Wise Forever **10.00** Ruth Rendell's Thirteen Steps Down **12.05** Wycliffe **1.15** A Touch of Frost **3.00** May the Best House Win **4.40** In Loving Memory **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

**ITV4**
**12.45 Film:** Shalako (1968) **1.50** FYI Daily **1.55 Film:** Shalako (1968) **3.00 Film:** The Man from the Alamo (1953) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05 Film:** The Man from the Alamo (1953) **4.40 Film:** The Hanging Tree (1959) **5.40** FYI Daily **5.45 Film:** The Hanging Tree (1959) **6.55** Fishing Impossible **9.00** Benidorm **10.05 Film:** The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad! (1988) **11.10** FYI Daily **11.15 Film:** The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad! (1988) **11.50** BRDC Formula 3 Championship Highlights **12.55** Fifth Gear **1.55** Paula Radcliffe: Sports Life Stories

**E4**
**4.00 Film:** Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010) **6.20** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.05** E4's Tattoo Artist of the Year **1.10** Celebrity First Dates **2.15** Naked Attraction

**Film4**
**11.00** Flight of the Navigator (1986) **1.00** The Princess Diaries (2001) **3.15** The Borrowers (1997) **5.00** Rat Race (2001) **7.10** Airplane II: The Sequel (1982) **9.00** The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1 (2014) **11.20** Friends with Benefits (2011) **1.30** The Players (2012)

Sandwell age UK

# Advice Sessions

**Age UK Sandwell will be at the following locations every other week from November 2016**
**Call our office for details**

**Thimblemill Library**
Monday 9.30am – 1.00pm
Thimblemill Road, Smethwick, B67 5RJ

**Glebefields Library**
Tuesday – 9.30am – 1.00pm
St Marks Road, Tipton, DY4 0SZ

**Wednesbury Library**
Wednesday – 9.30am – 1.00pm
Walsall Street, Wednesbury, WS10 9EH

**Langley Library**
Monday 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Barrs Street, Oldbury, B68 8QT

**Blackheath Library**
Wednesday - 2.00pm -5.00pm
145 High Street, Blackheath, Rowley Regis, B65 0EA

**The Wesley Community Centre**
Thursday - 1.00pm - 3.00pm
High Street, West Bromwich

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**0121 314 4526**
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# PICK OF THE WEEK

## FILM CHOICES

**MONDAY**
**Welcome to the Jungle, Channel 5, 11.05pm**
A bounty hunter is sent into the depths of the Brazilian rainforest to locate a prominent businessman's son, but ends up trying to find a legendary artefact before a crook gets his hands on it. Action comedy, starring Dwayne Johnson, Seann William Scott and Christopher Walken, and an uncredited cameo by Arnold Schwarzenegger. (2003)

**TUESDAY**
**Kidnapping Lizzie: Nightmare Visions, Channel 5, 3.15pm**
When 15-year-old Lizzie is kidnapped, her amicably divorced parents Judith and Martin are devastated when the police can find no trace of her. A psychic comes forward claiming to know the teenager's whereabouts, but it soon becomes clear she has an agenda of her own. Thriller, starring Nadia Bjorlin, Richard Ruccolo and Vanessa Evigan. (2016)

Fright Night, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm

**WEDNESDAY**
**Running for Her Life, Channel 5, 3.15pm**
Amateur triathlete Alison Wynn hires a controversial trainer who uses hypnotherapy as a training technique and begins to improve physically, but the return of repressed memories takes a toll on her family life. Alison's daughter soon grows concerned and works to save her mother from the psychologically-manipulative coach. (2016)

**THURSDAY**
**Deadly Departure, Channel 5, 3.15pm**
The family of FBI agent Sarah Plummer are taken hostage while she is on a flight to Washington, DC. While on the flight, she meets a mysterious stranger seated beside her, and is forced to make a decision that could cost her the lives of her husband and 12-year-old son. Action, starring Dina Meyer. (2016)

**FRIDAY**
**Fright Night, BBC1, 11.55pm**
A teenager realises his new neighbour is a vampire, but cannot convince anyone of the danger they are in. He turns to a magician with a horror-themed Las Vegas show to help him. Comedy horror remake, with Anton Yelchin and Colin Farrell. (2011)

## Dave feels the pressure to bring the killer to justice

On August 22, 2007, 11-year-old Rhys Jones was walking home from football practice in the Croxteth Park area of Liverpool when he was shot in the back by hooded youth riding a silver mountain bike aiming at members of a rival mob.

Rhys' mum Melanie rushed to the scene when she heard what had happened, but by the time she had reached him, he was unconscious.

Paramedics tried for over a hour and a half to resuscitate him, but Rhys was later pronounced dead at Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

As well as being the star player for his team, Rhys was a dedicated supporter of Everton FC, and had a season ticket along with his father and brother.

The club's players laid a floral tribute, boots and shirts at the scene of the crime, while players, staff and fans paid tribute to him in a minute-long applause at the home game against Blackburn Rovers three days after his death.

Over 2,500 mourners attended Rhys' funeral at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on September 6, with Everton footballer Alan Stubbs reading from the Bible during the service.

In the days, weeks and months following Rhys' death, more than 300 police officers and gun crime specialists were being deployed in the hunt for his killer.

This new drama chronicles the tragedy which shook the city of Liverpool and the nation as a whole, and looks at how Rhys' killer, Sean Mercer, and his associates were finally caught and prosecuted.

Liverpudlian actor Stephen Graham (Boardwalk Empire, This is England and Taboo) leads the cast as Detective Superintendent Dave Kelly, who led the investigation into Rhys's murder on behalf of Merseyside Police.

Sinead Keenan and Bryan F O'Byrne play Rhys's grieving parents Melanie and Steve.

In tonight's first episode, DS Kelly is charged with bringing Rhys' teenage killer to justice, but although the assailant's identity is well known, finding the evidence to charge him proves to be a far more difficult challenge.

The show's writer and executive producer Jeff Pope has made his name with this type of dark, real-life drama.

As well as penning the scripts for Mrs Biggs, about Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs' wife, and The Widower about serial murderer Malcolm Webster, he also exec-produced Appropriate Adult exploring the crimes of Fred and Rosemary West.

For Little Boy Blue, Pope and the cast and crew have recreated the moving moment when Rhys' parents and brother bravely lined up in front of the crowd at Goodison Park to pay tribute to the murdered boy.

With the Z Cars theme playing as they walked onto the pitch, applause rang out around the stadium for a one-minute tribute in his memory.

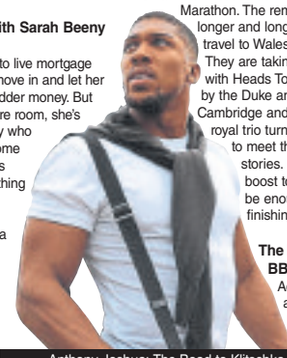
Stephen Graham stars in Little Boy Blue, Monday, ITV, 9pm

# BEST OF THE REST

**MONDAY**
**Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby BBC2, 9pm**
Giles Coren and Monica Galetti work at Fogo Island Inn, which is sited on a rocky outpost off the northeast coast of the island of Newfoundland in Canada and pays homage to the settlers who arrived from Ireland and Devon to fish for cod – with most islanders still having Irish or West Country accents. Housekeepers Cynthia and Lori rope Giles into a community boat race, while Monica spends time with local guide Norm, who reveals surprising the secrets behind growing the perfect potato for use in the hotel.

**TUESDAY**
**Anthony Joshua: The Road to Klitschko BBC1, 10.45pm**
It is the most eagerly anticipated bout of the year, and Saturday's fight for the IBF, WBA and IBO heavyweight crowns at Wembley Stadium will be watched by 90,000 people – a post-war record for a boxing event in Britain. Joshua has 18 knockouts from as many fights since turning pro in 2013, while Klitschko has been pro for 21 years now and has 64 wins and four defeats. The Brit, who won a gold medal at the London 2012 Olympics, has said the fight 'marks the highest point of my climb through the professional rank,' while the Ukrainian, who turned 41 last month, has admitted he is taking on 'the best of the young generation.' So who will come out on top over 12 rounds in London at the weekend? This insightful portrait shows Joshua's preparations for the big fight.

**WEDNESDAY**
**How to Live Mortgage Free with Sarah Beeny Channel 4, 8pm**
Some people might think it's easy to live mortgage free with Sarah Beeny – you just move in and let her pay the bills using her Property Ladder money. But seeing as we can't all fit in her spare room, she's meeting people around the country who have managed to buy their own home without racking up huge debts. This week, that includes a twentysomething couple who are building their first home together on the back of an agricultural trailer for £25,000 and a woman in West Yorkshire who managed to convert three derelict garages into a stunning work and living space for just £12,000. We also hear from the couple who halved their building costs by creating their two-bed home inside some shipping containers.


Anthony Joshua: The Road to Klitschko, Tuesday, BBC1, 10.45pm

**THURSDAY**
**Mind Over Marathon BBC1, 9pm**
Nick Knowles presents the conclusion of the two-part documentary following a group of runners with mental health issues as they train for the London Marathon. The remaining runners attempt longer and longer distances and even travel to Wales for a mountain run. They are taking part in the marathon with Heads Together, a campaign led by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry - and the royal trio turn up to a training session to meet the runners and hear their stories. It proves a massive boost to the runners, but will it be enough to get them to the finishing line?

**The Last Kingdom BBC2, 9pm**
Aethelflaed goes missing, and her newlywed husband Aethelred returns to Winchester to deliver the news to Alfred. With the realm in chaos, Odda finds himself questioning whether the will of his king and the good of the kingdom might now be at odds. Having dispatched his own son for failing to remain loyal to the crown in the past, will Odda now follow his lead and turn against Alfred? Meanwhile, Uhtred returns home to Gisela, and tries to uncover the truth about Athelflaed's disappearance by his own means. However, own actions once again come back to haunt him when he finally comes face-to-face with Sigefrid, the Viking warlord he mutilated during his campaign in Northumbria. Confronted with an impossible decision, Uhtred suddenly finds the future of Wessex resting on his shoulders. Historical drama, starring Alexander Dreymon.

**FRIDAY**
**Lethal Weapon ITV, 9pm**
Strong-willed viewers may still be working their way through their Easter eggs but it's Christmas in California, and the precinct is getting ready to celebrate. However, the festive mood is ruined when the officers are called to investigate a murder that's been linked to Eddie Flores, the deranged nephew of an infamous drug lord who has run-up against Riggs before. That's not the only ghost of Christmas past that's haunting the volatile cop.

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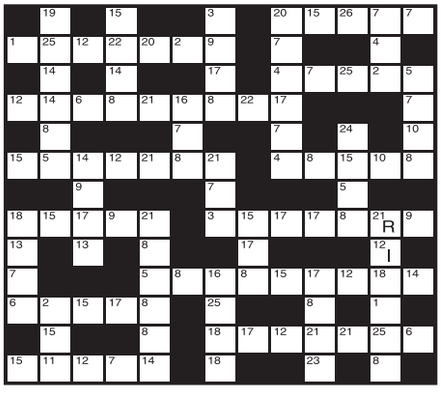
# BRAIN GYM

No.426

## Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



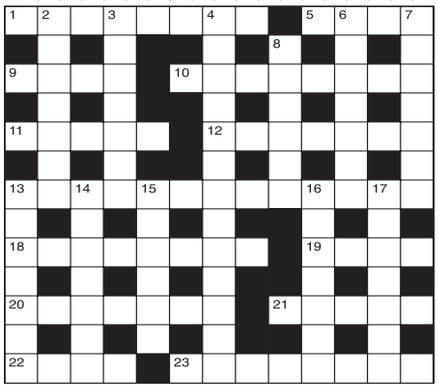
| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 14 |
| 2 | 15 |
| 3 | 16 |
| 4 | 17 |
| 5 | 18 |
| 6 | 19 |
| 7 | 20 |
| 8 | 21 R |
| 9 | 22 |
| 10 | 23 |
| 11 | 24 |
| 12 I | 25 |
| 13 | 26 |

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | V | R | D | G | Y | E | H | T | Q | J | C | Z |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| W | O | F | A | U | K | I | B | P | N | L | X | M |

## Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



### Cryptic Clues:

**Across**

1. Traffic sign erected by the socialists? (4,4)
5. Alternative letters for flex (4)
9. Clever - gets blockhead to take drink round (4)
10. Matches won't work? (8)
11. Command a class (5)
12. Music for when students have fun? (7)
13. Will serve as a gift at this time (3,3,7)
18. Royal Automobile Club cared about record of runners (4,4)
19. Eager to help about five (4)
20. Carefully look at returned axe belonging to me (7)
21. Questionable - like an angler's tale? (5)
22. Quantity thus given to the first person (4)
23. The usual flag (8)

**Down**

2. Prohibition - leave when you've got me back to the bar! (7)
3. Excuse before biblical quotation (7)
4. Ideal prospects, despite being tense after 13? (6,7)
6. Former 8 period (3-4)
7. Cut up little Diana's religious group (7)
8. Not a better half? (6)
13. Counterfeiting blacksmiths? (7)
14. To get back could be a miracle (7)
15. The C-i-C is extremely busy (6)
16. Ocean flier arrived as bride changed (7)
17. Therein both are excluded (7)

### Quick Clues:

**Across**

1. Odd (8)
5. Just (4)
9. Bill of fare (4)
10. Seemed (8)
11. Less (5)
12. Entangle (7)
13. Sympathy (6-7)
18. Completely (8)
19. Large town (4)
20. Disorder (7)
21. Rebuffs (5)
22. Unintelligent (4)
23. Critic (8)

**Down**

2. Hermit (7)
3. Strange (7)
4. Cherished thing (5,2,3,3)
6. Deductively (1,6)
7. Danger signal (3,4)
8. Weak (6)
13. Inundated (7)
14. To the letter (7)
15. East (6)
16. A permit (7)
17. Memorable (7)

## Sudoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | 9 | | 1 | | | | |
| | 3 | | 7 | | | | 5 | 1 |
| | | | 5 | | 9 | 2 | | |
| 1 | | 3 | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | 6 | | 3 |
| | | 5 | | 3 | 6 | 7 | | 2 |
| | 1 | 6 | 9 | | 4 | | | |
| 4 | | | | 8 | | | 7 | |
| | | | 2 | 7 | | 5 | | 4 |

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| 4 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| 3 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 |
| 2 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 4 |
| 9 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 |

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Impact; 4 Knocks; 9 Steering wheel; 10 Crossed; 11 Elude; 12 Adore; 14 Debar; 18 Tarts; 19 Decline; 21 Window cleaner; 22 Dreads; 23 Stalls.
Down: 1 Insect; 2 Preponderance; 3 Cards; 5 Nowhere; 6 Coeducational; 7 Solver; 8 Anode; 13 Respond; 15 Stowed; 16 Edict; 17 Hearts; 20 Crest.
QUICK - Across: 1 Impose; 4 Compel; 9 Pervasiveness; 10 Drastic; 11 Raise; 12 Adore; 14 Undue; 18 Class; 19 Excused; 21 Accident-prone; 22 Enlist; 23 Arrest.
Down: 1 Impede; 2 Part and parcel; 3 Smart; 5 Overrun; 6 Precious stone; 7 Lessen; 8 Since; 13 Resides; 15 Scrape; 16 Means; 17 Advent; 20 Caper.

## Quiz

1. What does the Mohs scale measure?
2. With which art form is Norman Rockwell associated?
3. From which drink is Calvados distilled?
4. Which actress was born Emilie Charlotte le Breton?
5. What is Europe's largest inland port?
6. Which group of plants has blue-green, yellow-green and gold-brown varieties?
7. Of which church are the sacred writings called the Divine Principle?
8. In which TV series did Lionel Stander play Max?
9. Whom did Idi Amin depose in 1971?
10. Of which ocean is the Beaufort Sea a section?

**Last week's solutions:**

**Quiz:** 1 New Zealand; 2 Prince Charles; 3 Partridge; 4 Minerva; 5 Robert Schumann; 6 Flushing; 7 Onion; 8 French; 9 Macaque; 10 The Warner Brothers.

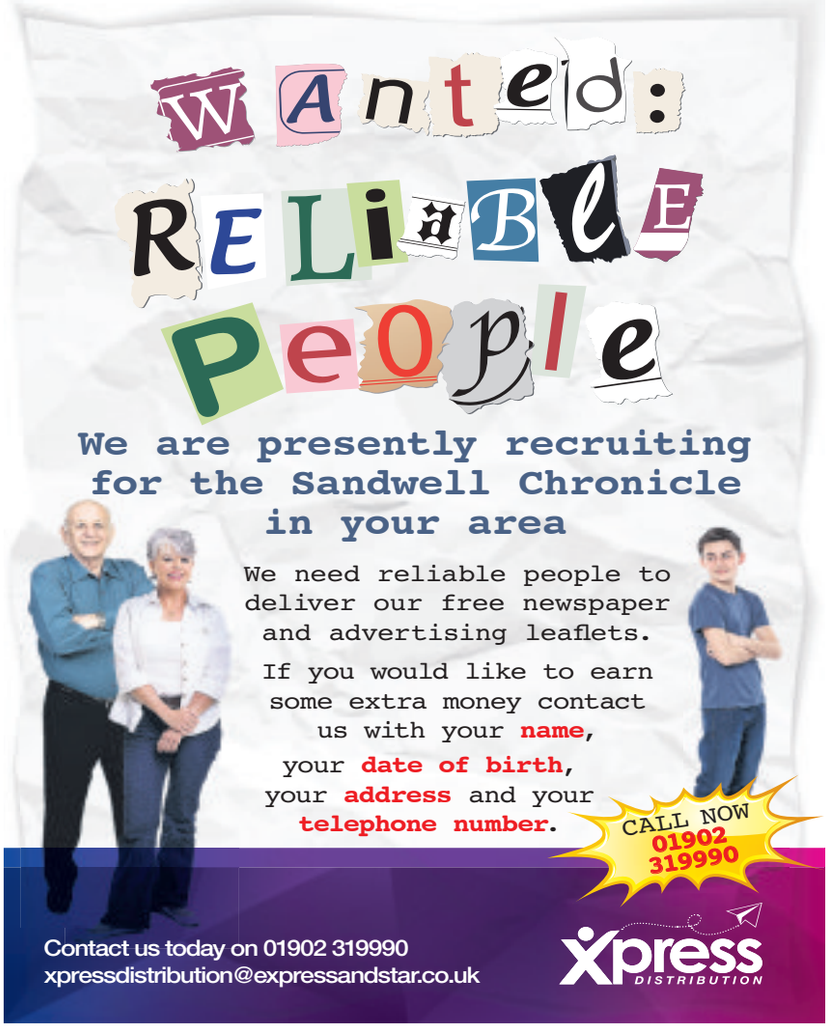
**Niner:** UNIVERSAL

## Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

**83412** gives a Swedish actress,
**5249** gives a British actress,
**42167927** gives a Romanian-born American actor.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |

# Why it's the Bel-gium of the ball

**AS a man who avoids buying clothes until his jeans are almost threadbare, my sense of fashion could be described as inept.**

I know vintage handbags can be a serious investment and Jimmy Choo is a shoemaker. But that's about it. So as my train rolls into Antwerp, Belgium's second city and one of Europe's biggest fashion and design hubs, I begin to wish I'd invested a bit more time and effort in my wardrobe.

Fortunately, the city's sense of style extends way beyond clothing. In terms of both architecture – and attitude – Antwerp, I soon discover, is seriously cool.

The journey to Antwerp takes three hours from London via Brussels on the Eurostar, so it's within relatively easy, hassle-free reach.

I disembark at the striking Antwerp Central Station, rated as one of the most beautiful train stations in the world for its striking stone and marble interior. Although originally built in the late 19th century, it's a mishmash of architectural styles.

Eclectic

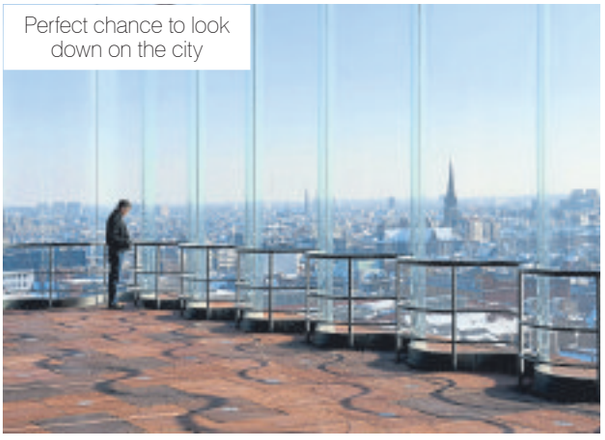
"It's got a few influences," our cycle tour guide, Nicolas de Belder, from Cyclant tells me, as we tour around the city on two wheels.

"Antwerp is very eclectic," he continues, giving me a brief history of the city that's home to around 500,000 inhabitants.

An important trading centre for sugar in the 1500s, it's now best known for its diamond and chemical industries. It's also one of the busiest ports in Europe and more important to Germany than Hamburg – or so Nicolas claims.

I've learned so much in my brief time in the city already, but there's more to come. Nicolas' lessons extend beyond economics and design, to encompass a thorough explanation on how to take a bike on an escalator.

City slicker – with a clear view of Antwerp


Perfect chance to look down on the city

There are few bridges in Antwerp, making tunnels underneath the river Scheldt the best crossing points. Many are accessed via escalators, and city cyclists learn from a young age that the correct way to carry a bike on these moving stairways is to lock the front wheel against a step, creating a 'T' shape.

I pop out on the river's left bank, a far quieter part of the city with spectacular views across to the old town and Antwerp's port. Rising high above the building tops is the spire of the Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady. The adjacent tower was never finished, only reaching a third of its intended height. In a country as flat as Belgium, anything tall is a major attraction, and Antwerp's cathedral is no exception.

The viewing platform atop the Museum aan de Stroom (MAS), is far more accessible. The building is a prime example of contemporary architecture and reflects the city's trading history and modern industrial focus.

Beer, is ubiquitous in Belgium, so I'm happy to be heading to De Koninck brewery.

It has been pumping out a fine selection of liquid amber since 1833, and the site has evolved to include a butcher, cheesemonger, bakery, chocolate shop and even a cycling store. Refreshingly, there is a ban on any chain retailers.

Back in the city centre, walking off my liquid lunch, I stroll along Schuttershofstraat, where Chanel and Burberry sit alongside local designer stores Natan and Coccodrillo. Perhaps I don't fully appreciate the city's concept stores and trend-setting designs, but what I've discovered in Antwerp is style, innovation and imagination to boot.

NICK MCAVANEY

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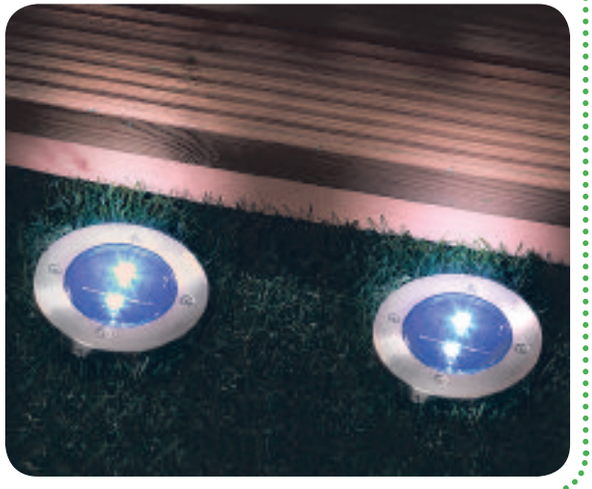

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# PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

## Original features in spacious, extended ideal family home

**A traditional detached property that has been extended, 44 Victoria Road, Oldbury, lies in one of the area's most sought after locations.**

Backing on to the rugby club playing fields and opposite West Smethwick Park Pool, it is for sale through Tom Giles at £289,950.

This home has excellent family accommodation, having been extended over the years to include a ground floor shower room, utility, office/study accommodation to the rear and still retaining some of its interesting and original features including colour leaded windows to entrance door and side panels and original panelling to staircase.

It occupies a good sized parcel of land, including a substantial garden to the rear which has been landscaped and immaculately maintained by the current owners. There is condensing combination boiler central heating and majority double glazing.

The front room has a bay window, a feature mahogany wooden fire surround with a marble insert and matching raised hearth with mahogany display niches to the end and a fitted brass framed Living Flame coal- effect gas fire and a picture rail.

The kitchen has a low level breakfast area, full height cooker unit containing double fan cooled oven, four-ring gas hob, under-counter provision for larder fridge and stainless steel halogen adjustable down lighters/ spotlights, plus an under-stairs storage cupboard.

There is also a lobby area and an inner hall plus a shower room/WC and a utility area and an office/study area.

Upstairs, bedroom one has a bay window and fitted wardrobes and en-suite shower facilities. Bedroom two has a floor mounted vanity unit with oval shaped wash-hand basin, while bedroom three also gives access to the loft.

The bathroom has a curved corner suite with a built-in canopy with a shower curtain.

Outside is a side stores/workshop area and an extensive landscaped and planted garden with a patio area.

### KEY FEATURES

- Traditional detached
- Most sought after area
- Backing on to rugby club fields
- Opposite West Smethwick Park Pool
- Extended

OLDBURY **£289,950**

### TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

**AGENT: Tom Giles**
**TEL: 0121 552 6171**
**EMAIL: general@tomgiles.net**

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# A beautifully-presented detached with no chain

**A beautifully presented detached property in Hagley Road West, Oldbury, is for sale through Robert Oulsnam at £194,950 with no chain.**

Features include two bedrooms, a modern style breakfast kitchen and off road parking.

The property is situated within Oldbury, just on the border of Bearwood.

The location is home to the beautiful and much enjoyed grounds of both Warley Woods and Lightwoods Park and is within ease of access to the City Centre.

**OLDBURY**
**£194,950**

Within 0.4 miles of the property lies Lightwoods Primary School and just 0.9 miles away are the wealth of amenities that Bearwood High Street has to offer.

In more detail, both bedrooms are double, the breakfast kitchen is in a contemporary style and includes an integral oven, hob and extractor.

There is also a vestibule entrance, a spacious lounge/diner and a well appointed first floor bathroom with a separate shower cubicle and a ground floor WC, plus a useful utility room and off road parking at the rear.

For a viewing, or for further information, contact Robert Oulsnam on 0121 429 9986 or visit www.oulsnam.net


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NEW

3 OLDBURY VICTORIA ROAD £289,950
2 A wonderful and unique opportunity to acquire a well maintained traditional Detached property providing excellent family accommodation. With conservatory and utility area, central heating, double glazing, extensive garden to rear and off-road parking. EPC Rating TBC
1

NEW

4 OLDBURY SYCAMORE ROAD £225,000
2 Modern detached residence offering good sized family accommodation, situated within walking distance of Langley High Street. Central heating, double glazing, garage and off-road parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating C.
1

NEW

3 OLDBURY PRINCES ROAD £149,950
1 Spacious semi-detached house having been superbly maintained and improved by the current owners with conservatory, re-fitted shower room and built-in wardrobes in two bedrooms. Fantastic large established private rear garden. EPC Rating TBC
1

NEW

3 OLDBURY POUND ROAD £129,950
2 A terraced house in popular and convenient location In need of general updating and improvement. Double glazing, central heating (where specified) front and rear gardens and detached garage. EPC Rating TBC
1

NEW

3 OLDBURY MERTON CLOSE £122,500
1 The opportunity to acquire a spacious three storey town house offering good sized family accommodation and being situated in a popular and convenient residential location. Central heating, double glazing, off-road parking and established garden. EPC Rating E
1

3 TIVIDALE LOWER CITY ROAD £229,950
2 A detached property situated in one of the areas most sought after locations with potential to extend to side and rear subject to Planning and Building Consent. In need of some improvement. EPC Rating TBC
1

2 WEST BROMWICH SANDWELL ROAD NORTH £209,950
1 A detached bungalow situated within half a mile of Sandwell Valley Country Park & Dartmouth Park benefitting from central heating, double glazing, private rear garden and garage and parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating D
1

2 OLDBURY RUSSELL CLOSE £149,950
1 Well presented and maintained spacious semi-detached bungalow with gas central heating, double glazing and solar panels. No upward chain and INTERNAL INSPECTION RECOMMENDED. EPC Rating D
1

3 OLDBURY WOLVERHAMPTON ROAD £149,950
1 MUST BE SEEN. Spacious end terraced property offering good sized family accommodation well worthy of early inspection. Gas central heating and double glazing. NO UPWARD CHAIN. Popular and convenient location. EPC Rating C
1

3 ROWLEY REGIS BLACKBERRY LANE £135,000
2 The opportunity to acquire an extended end of terraced house in need of slight improvement with potential for further extension to the side subject to planning approval. Central heating, double glazing, side garage/store and private rear garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating E
1

3 OLDBURY EAST AVENUE £119,950
1 Terraced house in need of general updating offering ideal first time purchase or investment opportunity with the benefit of central heating, double glazing, garden to front, parking at rear and low maintenance garden. EPC Rating D
1

2 OLDBURY JACKSON COURT, TITFORD ROAD £92,500
1 First floor flat warranting full internal inspection to appreciate the accommodation being offered. Double glazing and convector heaters. Ideal first time purchase or investment opportunity. EPC Rating D
1

2 HANDSWORTH FARNHAM ROAD £75,000
2 A traditional mid-terraced property situated in Handsworth requiring complete and full modernisation, being sold with all current contents internally and externally. Available to CASH PURCHASERS ONLY. EPC Rating TBC
1

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# An impressive four-bed semi-detached house

OLDBURY
£269,950

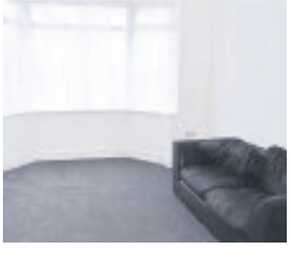
**An impressive and improved four-bedroomed semi-detached house in Wilson Road, Oldbury, has good family-sized accommodation.**

It is for sale through Robert Oulsnam at £269,950 with no chain.

Features of note include its four bedrooms and its stunning open plan dining kitchen.

Attractively presented it also has a spacious lounge with French doors leading to the dining kitchen. The dining kitchen comes with with integral goods of an oven, hob, extractor and dishwasher. An excellently spacious room, it is fitted with highly attractive white units, complemented by black granite working surfaces and high gloss flooring.

**Contact Robert Oulsnam on 0121 429 9986.**



# Three-bed semi has recently been renovated

BEARWOOD
£250,000 <<<

**Recently renovated, this three-bedroomed semi-detached house in Pitcairn Road, Bearwood, lies in a most desirable area of Warley Woods.**

It is for sale through Liberty Estates at £250,000.

Having undergone a full renovation the property has three bedrooms, a porch, an entrance hall, a kitchen/diner, a living room, a four piece bathroom suite, a utility with a ground floor WC and off road parking. The entrance hall has under-stairs storage and stairs off to the first floor. The living room has a bay window and carpeting. The smart refitted kitchen/diner has patio doors to the rear, wall base and draw units, roll edge work surface, an electric hob and oven with a hood over, integrated fridge and freezer and a wall mounted vertical radiator and splash-back tiling.

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# Bungalow on generous plot has four bedrooms

OLDBURY
£219,950 <<<

**A charming four-bedroomed bungalow on a generous plot of land, 97 Ashes Road, Oldbury, is for sale through Love Your Postcode at £219,950.**

This four-bedroom bungalow with a garage is convenient for commuting and local schools.

It has a large driveway, providing space for multiple vehicles or motor homes, flanked by a neat garden area.

The rear garden area is a brilliant size.

The home has an entrance hall, further hallway, a lounge with a gas fireplace, a kitchen/breakfast room with matching wall and base units.

There are four bedrooms, with bedroom four having an en-suite WC. The bathroom has both a bath and a shower cubicle.

**Contact Love Your Postcode on 0800 862 0870 or visit www.loveyourpostcode.com**

# Terrace ideal first time buy or as investment

OLDBURY
£119,950

**An ideal first time purchase or investment buy, this three bedroomed terraced house in East Avenue, Oldbury, is in need of general updating.**

Having built-in appliances in the kitchen and fitted bedroom furniture to all bedrooms, it also lies in a convenient residential location.

It is for sale through Tom Giles at £119,950.

With double glazing and gas central heating, in brief its accommodation includes an entrance hall, a large store cupboard, a lounge/dining room, a kitchen with built-in appliances, three bedrooms, a shower room and a separate toilet.

There is a garden to the front, parking at the rear and a low maintenance garden.

**Contact Tom Giles on 0121 552 6171.**

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**Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton** — £134,950 OFFERS
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**Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton** — £164,950 OFFERS
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**Willenhall Street, Wednesbury** — £90,000 Offers
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**Hall Crescent, West Bromwich** — £154,950 Offers
1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

**Shelton Close, Wednesbury** — £160,000 Offers
1 | 3 | 1 | EPC E

**Vicarage Road, Wednesbury** — £235,000 Offers
2 | 3 | 1 | EPC C

**Market Place, Tipton FEES APPLY** — £395 PCM
1 | 1 | 1 | EPC E

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# 1 Family

## elderly & disabled

**CADDI -106G** mobility scooter, c/w battery charger, instruction booklet. Good condition. £350ono. 07736 591873.

**DOUBLE ELECTRIC** Bed, includes headboard, mattress with cover, buyer to collect, £400. 01922 629254.

**MOBILITY SCOOTER**
Quingo Vitess 4 to 8mph. road legal .80hours use..with charger and storage cover. you dont need to be disabled to use it new cost £2500.
**£675 ono**
**01562754127**

**MOBILITY SCOOTERS** from £350 can deliver, servicing available. Call: Powerlink, Blackheath 01384 255019 / 07831 246292.

## jewellery & watches

**WANTED OLD GENTS WRIST WATCHES**
Omega, Rolex etc by private collector not dealer. Working or broken.
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# 2 Leisure Time

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**CARAVAN WANTED**. Can collect asap. Caravan wanted. Call me on 07717 090817.

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12ft 6ins two berth, beautiful little van, all ready to roll, including television,
**£3,950 ono.**
**01922 415779.**

**We Want Your Motorhome**
Finance Cleared
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**Please Call**
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Top of the range caravan.
2002, 2 berth, dry stored.
In very good condition.
No damp, owner retiring.
Lovely van,.
Lots and lots of extras,
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**ONE SOLAR PANEL**
100watt
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6 berth, c/w auto mover, awning, cover, water butt, hitch and wheel lock, plus loads more extras.
Very good condition.
**£12,500 ono.**
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**Every Sunday**
**and Bank Holiday Monday**
**Muckley Corner, Hall Lane, Lichfield, WS14 0BE**
**Booters £4**
**6.00am-2pm**
**07538 842842**

**£ £ £ £ IT'S BACK IT'S BACK**
**MIDLANDS BIGGEST CAR BOOT SALE**
SELLERS TURN UP FROM 6AM
THIS SUNDAY AND EVERY SUNDAY
Now at Dark Lane, Featherstone WV10 7HT
Just off main A460.
1minute *from J11 M6*
1minute *J1 M54*
6 am-2 pm
*All enquiries* **Tel: 07831 192 116**
**Or for more information visit**
**www.gocarbootsales.com**

*Indoor Car Boot Sale.*
*Saturday 29th April*
*Walsall FC Supporters Club*
*Bescot Crescent, WS1 4TS*
*Doors open - Sellers 9am / Buyers 10am*
*Entry 30p / Tables £5 & £7.50*
*Booked on 01922 621179*

**BEST SUNDAY BOOTSALE**
**Only £5 per Car/Van.**
**7AM START. Cocksparrow Lane, Cannock WS12 4PB**
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**BEST WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY BOOTSALE**
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**07890 267041**

**BIGGEST SATURDAY BOOTSALE**
**Catering positions available**
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# 3 Home & Services

## furniture

katharine house hospice — enhancing life and living
**Furniture not sold, why not donate it?**
Reg charity number: 1011712
We can turn your quality used furniture into 1st class care for patients at Katharine House
**Call us now on 01785 760715**
for details or to arrange a FREE collection

**FURNITURE NOT SOLD** why not donate it to care for patients at Katharine House Hospice. Call us now on 01785 760715

**MODERN SOLID** oak dining table, 6 chairs, excellent condition, £100. 01785 257392 after 6pm.

**SOFAS** 3 seater + 2 seater beautiful crushed velvet. Chesterfield style with scatterback cushions. Totally all unused. Cost over £1400 accepting £695. 07787 636984 (T)

**5 FOOT KING SIZE luxury memory foam bed** 2 draw divan base. Cost over £800 accepting £245. Also 4 ft 6 available, same specification. All unused 07787 636984. (T)

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**AMAZING SALE** Autos, tumble dryers from £79. Gas & electric cookers, fires, fridge freezers, built in ovens & hobs at sale price 01902 403770 Past and Present 24-26 Church St, Bilston (opp town hall).

## in your garden

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Supply and Fit or DIY
*Credit cards taken • Free quotes*
*WS3 2BQ*
Freephone 0500 506041 or 01922 712184

**6x5 Lap Panels**
**£17 each (inc vat)**
**WS3 2BQ**
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**All reclaimed building materials**
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**07956 627367**

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That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

**ASH RECLAMATION** new and used building materials, upvc doors and windows 01543 453222.

## items wanted

**READERS ARE ADVISED** to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

**MASSIVE £1,000,000 STOCK CLEARANCE ZONE**
WE HAVE SMASHED THE PRICES ON HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF SUITES, SOFAS, ARMCHAIRS, DINING SETS, BEDS & BEDROOM FURNITURE AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!
PLUS UPTO 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT (SUBJECT TO STATUS)

HUNDREDS OF BEDFRAMES, DIVANS & MATTRESSES TO TAKE AWAY
SINGLE MATT FROM £39
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KING MATT FROM £79

MARBLE COMPOSITE HEAVY DINING TABLE & 6 FAUX LEATHER CHAIRS IN GREY & BLACK
WAS £1695 - SAVE £1000
NOW £695

INTEREST FREE CREDIT EXAMPLES
SPEND £500 £50 deposit and 9 x monthly payments @ £50 per month Total payable = £500 — 0% APR REPRESENTATIVE
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Available on many sale items. Exclusions apply. See instore for details.

LEATHER & FABRIC RECLINER CHAIRS UPTO 70% OFF DISPLAY MODELS EG. GUNNOR RECLINER IN WINE WAS £999 NOW £299
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PLUS...UP TO 75% OFF OCCASIONAL ITEMS
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Telephone: 0121 557 6885
BFC FURNITURE FACTORY OUTLET STORE
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PICTURES FOR GUIDANCE ONLY
OPENING HOURS: MON-SAT 10AM-6PM SUNDAY 10AM-4PM

## loans

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**CLIENT COMPUTERS**
Certified technician & Microsoft partner.
Repair & maintain laptops and PCs. In West Midlands.
Virus removal, broken screens, wifi.
Windows problems etc.
Home visits or bring to me.
Long established.
Laptops available.
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## specialists at your service

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Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
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MADE-TO-MEASURE
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UP TO **50% OFF***
MEASURING & FITTING INCLUDED
BLINDS I CURTAINS I SHUTTERS I CARPETS
**HILLARYS**
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*Ts & Cs apply

## bathrooms

**JR Bathrooms**
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TILING/PLASTERING/ FREE QUOTES
20% off throughout March!
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**BATHROOM DESIGN.** All bathrooms fitted, tiling, flooring, complete bathrooms. 07850 382548.

**JR Bathrooms** Over 20 years exp in bathrooms and plastering. 20% off 07392 379741 / 01543 529648.

## building services

**AD DAMP PROOFING**
APPROVED CONTRACTOR
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**DAVIES & SON BUILDERS**
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*Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.*
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DELIVERY AVAILABLE
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## gardening services

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All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
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• Landlord Certificates
• Gas Leaks Traced
Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
*DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs*
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**READERS ARE ADVISED To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.** It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

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All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
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**0121 6010479**

**DAVIES INSTALLATIONS** Building work, plumbing, decking, supply & fit kitchens and bathrooms. Call: 07793 747829 / 01543 300444.

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**LOCK & CARPENTRY** Plumbing, Small job specialist. Free quotes 01902 683100 or 07934 460864.

## house clearances

**ALL ROUND CLEARANCE**
*Professional family run business*
House clearances full or part, also garages, sheds etc.
Telephone Kev
**07794 912844**

**A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE**
***Full, part and single rubbish removed.***
Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
**01922 492007**

**A ABSOLUTE BEST** cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327**

**A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE** Full, part and single rubbish removed. Garage and sheds cleared. Leather 3 piece suites / leather chesterfields wanted. Call now 01922 492007.

## ironing services

**KAREN BATES**
**10% off first orders**
Ironing Services - Stafford
**07841 677282**

## kitchen fitters

**THE KITCHEN FITTER** Over 20 years experience. Call 07881 654757 or 01543 373233.

## lock services

**LOCKRITE** local father and daughter locksmiths, lock-outs, broken locks, UPVC specialist, 24hr service. 01922 780078.

## painters / decorators

**A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING** service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

**C&D DECORATING** City & Guilds / Wallpapering. Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

**LADY DECORATOR**, full house or one wall - to customer requirments. For a quote call 07522 643706.

## plans prepared

**ADAM DESIGN**, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

## plastering

**MINT PLASTERING**
For the very best in plastering and rendering, full rooms inc materials from 110. Halls, stairs and landings from 200
30 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
**01922 606503 / 07519 694516**

**M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services.** Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

**MINT PLASTERING** & rendering 30 yrs exp. All work guaranteed. 01922 606503 or 07519 694516.

**STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE** Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

## plumbing & heating

**ALL PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN**
No job too small or large.
Call Will for a free quote
**07521 411108**

**A.A HEATING & PLUMBING** All gas work. Install/ Service/ Repair. 01922 660410 or 07540 950588.

**GAS CENTRAL HEATING** Central heating and Boiler changes. Gas Safe, Free Quotes: 07497 826697.

**PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN** No job too small or large. Call Will for a free quote on: 07521 411108.

## removals

**KT HOUSE REMOVALS**
*12 years experience.*
*SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.*
*LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.*
**Free Quotes - Call Ric on:**
**07771 727119**

**CALL DEAN NOW:** For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

**KC REMOVALS** We beat any quote, full or part loads, all areas. Anything considered. Call on 07867 862227.

**KT REMOVALS** 12 yrs exp. Single items to full load removals. Local / distance. Call Ric: 07771 727119.

## roofing

**A GRIFFITHS & SON**
**ROOFING & BUILDING SERVICES**
**Pitched and Flat Roofs.**
**All types of repairs undertaken.**
Chimneys, Fascias and Guttering.
*NO JOB TOO SMALL!*
*35 Years experience*
07941 907401 or 01902 885771

**MG ROOFING** Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

## rubbish removal

**LETS TALK RUBBISH** No Skips Needed.Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

## skip hire

**A absolute affordable skip**
**RUSSELL SKIPS**
**Mini, midi skips**
**Prompt delivery / collection**
**(0121) 520 3388 / 07721 387990**

**AAA SKIP HIRE** All sizes available, competitive prices. Call: 01922 711411(option 2) or 07592 940556.

**GOLDSHILL SKIPS**
Bring your own waste cheaper than skips. General, Green, Wood waste any size vehicle. Phone for prices:
**0121 557 3346**

**STONES SKIP HIRE**
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stoneskiphire.co.uk

## upholstery

**MR B'S UPHOLSTERY**
*RE- UPHOLSTERING OF SOFA'S, DINING FURNITURE, CARAVANS, CAR RETRIMS AND MORE.*
**www.mrbsupholstery.co.uk**
01543 500677 07738 851601

## t.v. / home entertainment

## service

**AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST** Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc, CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation. Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

# 4 Pets & Animals

## pets corner

**NOTICE TO READERS**
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

**BABY BUDGIE** new cage with stand, toys and food, £40. 07716 847443.

# 5 Business & Farming

## commercial premises

**UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE** to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

# 6 Property

## accommodation to let

**J9 Accommodation**
**NO DEPOSIT**
**★MOVE IN TODAY★**
**Studios**
*from* **£90pw***
**Rooms**
*from* **£65pw***
**Includes Most Bills*
**CHECK WEBSITE FOR LIVE LIST**
Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme
**01902 213121**
**J9accommodation.com**

**NOTICE TO READERS**
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

**NOTICE TO READERS**
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

**BLOXWICH** Bedsit in secure building, own kitchen / bathroom, £260pcm plus bills. Deposit / reference required. No DSS. Age restriction applies. 07738 103602.

**WE LOVE TENANTS**
**We currently have Rooms / Bedsits / Studios and 1 Bed Flats available in:**
- **Wolverhampton** - city centre
- **West Bromwich**
- **Willenhall** - town centre
- **Darlaston**

**ALL INCLUSIVE RENTS AVAILABLE.**
DSS 35+ welcome. Deposits from £150
**Call 07791 476943 to book your viewing TODAY!**
**Referral fees also offered if you refer a friend!**

## properties wanted

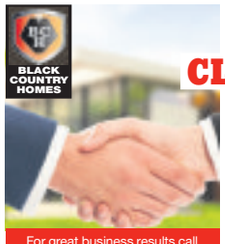
**WE PAY 100%**
**of purchase price** EVERY TIME!
**For Your House CASH**
**You agree the price, we buy the house...**
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
**0800 999 999 6**
**01384 500 500**
30 yrs
www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

**Wolverhampton properties**
**CASH NOW FOR YOUR HOUSE**
UP TO **£25,000**
We can buy your house in **2 days**
**CASH ADVANCE NOW (in 24hrs)**
• Free Solicitors • No Fees • Any House • Any Condition
**0800 389 6788**
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week Terms applicable

**I CAN BEAT ANY PRICE!**
I pay 100% of purchase price
Call now for the best price on your house
■ Guaranteed offer* ■ Free solicitors
■ Any condition ■ No fees*
* Terms apply
24 hours Free phone or landline
**0800 783 2822**
**01384 226086**
GUARANTEED £
Dewmark Homes

**pink** run by women
**sell quick**
• No Fees* • Any area*
• Any property • Repossessions stopped
• Any condition • Deceased estates
• Free confidential service
Call free 24 hours 7 days a week to listen
**0800 044 8109** **01922 689023**

**Home Cash Buyer**
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
**£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££**
**Houses / Land Required**
Ring Paul 24/7 Local **07870 341 089**
**Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154**
**Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049**
**Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901**
**www.homecashbuyer.co.uk**




**CHOOSE CLASSIFIED**
**"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates."**
*Black Country Homes*
For great business results call
**01902 319 191**
ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

**WE BUY ANY HOUSE CASH**
CALL US FREE 24 Hours/ 7days
**0800 246 1047**
CASH ADVANCE WITHIN 24 HOURS
WE OFFER **£20,000** CASH ADVANCE
✓ NO Fees & FREE Solicitors ✓ We Buy Any Area & Any Condition
**www.ukfastsale.co.uk**

**I BUY HOUSES**
- Expired listings
- Fire damaged houses
- Debt ridden houses
- Vacant houses
- Smelly houses
- Unwanted houses

Any place, any area, any condition. If you don't want it, I do!
**Call Amy: 07511 299 010**

**CHOOSE CLASSIFIED**
**"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"**
*Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer*
For great business results call
**01902 319 191**
ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

**Need to sell your home fast?**
**We can help you make a fresh start**
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start
Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY

**MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS**
**WHY NOT CALL US TODAY**
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
**0121 405 0767**
*Terms and Conditions apply
OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

# 7 Jobs

## building & construction

**PLASTERER** also Tiler required. Immediate start. Local. Oldbury. Call 01384 230222.

**HAVE YOU CHECKED** your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

# 8 Motoring

**HAVE YOU CHECKED** your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

## cars under £1500

**BARGAIN**
**CITROEN C5**
1.8, dk red, 04 regn, 12 months Mot, low mileage. New tyres and battery.
**£600ono.**
**01922 412863 / 07999 708349.**

**ESTATE**
**FORD FOCUS 1.8TDi ESTATE**
53 reg, 12 months MoT,
**£450.**
**07875 053992.**

**BARGAIN**
**FORD FOCUS ZETEC**
5dr petrol, hatchback, 1600cc, silver, 53 reg., MoT December 2017, good condition.
**£250**
**07519 350414.**

## ECONOMICAL

**FORD KA**

Blue, 3 door hatchback, 2003, 1.3cc, 60mpg, MoT July 2017, pas.

Very economical.

Very reliable, driven daily.

Very good condition.

**Bargain £370 ono.**

**07954 091911.**

## GOOD RUNNER

**PEUGEOT 307S**

HDi 90, 2004, 1997cc, 5 door hatch back, Taxed, MoT.

Clean and in good condition.

**£750 ono**

**01543 871428 / 07578 641711. after 6pm**

## IMMACULATE

**VAUXHALL MERIVA**

**1.6 ACTIVE**

5dr, 2006 reg, petrol, one owner, 78,000 miles, ten months MoT, 11 stamp full service history, last service at 77,400, air con, alloys, radio/CD, electric windows, alarmed, pas, two keys.

Immaculate condition, must be seen.

**£1,495.**

**07486 666083.**

**VW LUPO**

999cc, Reliable, in very good condition. Full MoT, 38,000 miles.

**£650**

**07543 824815.**

## GOOD RUNNER

**VW POLO**

1.2 5dr hatch, 2003, metallic Silver, 86,000 genuine miles from new, alloys, A/C, 6 months MoT

**£695.**

**SOLD**

## MUST BE SEEN

**VW POLO**

3dr hatch, 1.2, silver, 68,000 miles, 6 months MoT, excellent condition throughout.

**£1,000 ono.**

**07914 407821.**

## cars over £1500

## MUST BE SEEN

**HYUNDAI i10 COMFORT**

39,495 miles, 59 plate.

Very good condition.

£30 a year tax.

**Offers.**

**Telephone 0121 553 5926.**

## EXCELLENT CONDITION

**NISSAN QASHQAI**

Diesel, red, November 61, 40,000 miles, MoT to April 2018.

**£7,950**

**01922 325249 or 07970 659226.**

## vehicles wanted

**CROWN MOTORS** guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

## scrap vehicles

**OUR ADVERTISERS** are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

**ABC AUTO SALVAGE**
**WANTED URGENT**
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
**0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.**

## spares & accessories

## crash / repairs / resprays

**PORTWAY RESPRAYS**
**Accident Repairs Cars and Vans**
**Self Prep Resprays from £250**
**OLDBURY 0121 552 3133**

# 9 Local Information

## public & legal notices

**SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**
**Regeneration and Economy**
**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**
**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**
**Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

The Council are of the opinion that the proposal may affect the setting of a listed building.

This is a major application.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DC/17/60435 | Sandwell MBC – Mr Max Cookson | West Smethwick Park West Park Road Smethwick | Proposed restoration and improvements of park and historic structures (Grade II Chance Memorial), Chance fountain, West Park Road and Victoria park entrances. Provision of lighting and CCTV, a two storey community pavilion with external events area, a new gym fitness area, improvements to existing MUGA (multi use games area). |

This is a Listed Building application.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DC/17/60436 | Sandwell MBC – Mr Max Cookson | West Smethwick Park West Park Road Smethwick | Proposed restoration of Chance memorial. |

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.00a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

**MR NICK BUBALO,** Director – Regeneration and Economy

**SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**The Borough Council of Sandwell (Johns Lane, Tipton) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017** intends to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along Johns Lane, Tipton between Horseley Heath and Bevan Road. Traffic will be diverted via Horseley Heath, Denbigh Road, Bevan Road and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is expected to be completed by 11/05/17, effective from 09/05/17. Purpose – remedial works to the carriageway by Balfour Beatty for National Grid Gas.

**The Borough Council of Sandwell (Knowle Road, Rowley Regis) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017** intends to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along Knowle Road, Rowley Regis between Doulton Road and Sheepfold Close. Traffic will be diverted via Doulton Road, Cornfields Road, Knowle Road and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is expected to be completed by 30/04/18, effective from 01/05/17. Purpose – support measure to traffic management measures on Doulton Road which are associated with the Kier Homes site. The road closure will operate as and when required.

**The Borough Council of Sandwell (Harborne Road, Oldbury) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017** intends to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along Harborne Road, Oldbury between Castle Road East and Lenwade Road. Traffic will be diverted via Abbey Road, Barclay Road, Lightwoods Hill and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is expected to be completed by 16/05/17, effective from 15/05/17 (9.30am - 3.30pm only). Purpose – maintenance works to a mobile phone mast by M J Quinn for Vodafone.

highways england

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(a) THE M5, M6 AND M42 MOTORWAYS (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2017**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Highways England Company Limited (Company No. 9346363) intends to make an Order on the M5, M6 and M42 Motorways, in the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, the City of Birmingham and the County of Worcestershire, to enable road marking and sign installation works in connection with the Oldbury Viaduct improvement scheme to be carried out.

The effect of the Order will be to close, at different times, –

1. the northbound carriageway of the M5 from its junction with the link road leading to the eastbound carriageway of the M42, to its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 4;
2. the northbound carriageway of the M5 from its junction with the exit slip road at Junction 4, to its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 3; and
3. the northbound carriageway of the M5, from its junction with the exit slip road at Junction 3, to its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 2; and
4. the link road leading -
   (a) from the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 4a, to the eastbound carriageway of the M42; and
   (b) to the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 4a, from the westbound carriageway of the M42;
   (c) from the northbound carriageway of the M5, to the southbound carriageway of the M6 at Junction 8;
   (d) from the northbound carriageway of the M5, to the northbound carriageway of the M6 at Junction 8; and
   (e) from the southbound carriageway of the M6 at Junction 4a, to the eastbound carriageway of the M42; and
5. the slip road leading –
   (a) from the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 4;
   (b) to the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 4;
   (c) from the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 3; and
   (d) to the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 3.

The work will be carried out overnight between 20:00 hours and 06:00 and is expected to start on Monday 8 May 2017 and continue for approximately 4 weeks. The order will come into force on 5 May 2017.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade, ambulance, or traffic officer purposes and vehicles being used in connection with the works will be exempt from the closures.

Diversion routes using alternative junctions of the M5 and M6, and via the A456, the A4123, the A34, the A4041, the A4031, the A41, the A454, the A463 will be signed.

For further enquiries please contact Colin Jackson on 0300 470 3109.

**Karen Eustace,** an officer in Highways England Company Limited.

Highways England Company Limited (Company No. 9346363) registered office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4LZ. A Company registered in England and Wales.

## LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to **Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk** (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

# 10 Personals

## personal

**ATTRACTIVE** lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

**BRITISH INDIAN MAN**

would like to meet women for dating, dinner, travelling and company, distance no problem.

**Box Number P20771,**

**Express and Star,**

**Queen Street,**

**Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.**

**MEET SEXY** local women, genuine adult contacts. fast & discreet. Call 0330 022 6244/07008 026348.

**SEARCHING FOR B DICKINSON**

Was a welder at Birmingham burner Middlemore Lane, Aldridge Walsall.

Please get in touch

**Box Number P20775, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.**

**BUY LOCAL SELL LOCAL**

**01902 317878**

**ClassifiedAds**

## Express & Star DATING

***YOUR regional dating service***, run by the dating experts who have been established since 1990. ***REAL people in YOUR region***

*Try it.. You'll love it!*

Dates in ***YOUR*** region

**Here's how to use your dating service ...**

To ***Place*** your advert call:
**0844 381 5936**
follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text
Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098** (**FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

***YOU*** can now ***Date ONLINE*** or via your mobile just visit:
**http://dating.expressandstar.com**

To ***Reply*** to members call:
**0906 500 3955**
calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:
***Text...*** **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 hi **get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max. 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:
**0906 500 3957**
calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

***THE*** biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

## Single Women

**REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.**

**CARIBBEAN** woman, 57 years young, medium build, WLTM a nice man, 55-63, for days out socialising, romance, non smoker. **Text only. Mailbox: 5774104**

**KATIE** 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

**SARAH,** 38, nice looking blue-eyed slim brunette, WLTM similar lonely male for fun times hopefully leading to LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426709**

**JANE**, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

**CHRIS,** 40, attractive slim sophisticated redhead, seeking male 30-50's to relax with and get to know. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426301**

**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

**CATHY,** 40s, slim attractive lady with an open-minded attitude to life, and WLTM a man of any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426579**

**EMILY**, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

**SUSAN,** 41, sophisticated, confident, discreet, attractive female seeking professional male over 38 for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426557**

**TAMIKA**, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

**KATHERINE** 38, attractive, single, very lonely and looking for love, fun and male companionship. pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426595**

**SAMANTHA**, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

**KAREN,** 46, witty female who loves to laugh, WLTM similar male to share interests, romance, cosy nights in and more. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426335**

**JASMINE**, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box 426201**

**BROWN** eyed female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5806373**

**HARRIETT** 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

**LOUISE,** 40s, youthful looking female looking for spontaneous male to put some love and lust back into my life. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426321**

**MELINDA**, 52yrs, attractive and broad minded seeking chap any age for some fun. Couples also. **Text only Mailbox: 4131946**

**FARMERS** daughter, 69, single, likes heavy horses, animals, meals out, GSOH, friendship only, 65-75. **Text only. Mailbox: 5799589**

**JOSIE**, sexy black lady, 52yrs seeks adult times with concerning gent, any age, discreet clean, womanly figure. **Text only Mailbox: 4028592**

**CHRIS,** 40, attractive slim sophisticated redhead, seeking male 30-50's to relax with and get to know. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426301**

**ANNABELLE**, sophisticated 28yrs hoping to meet older gent for adult fun, discreet, sincere, genuine advertiser, **Text only Mailbox: 4157105**

**JAN,** 46, lonely divorced romantic female, brown hair, green eyes, curvy feminine figure, employed, OHAC, WLTM attentive male for TLC. **Tel No; 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426255**

**PAM,** 40, cuddly feminine young looking female, OHAC, financially secure, looking for fun times without complications with likeminded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426253**

**MATURE** lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426349**

**GENTS,** please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426345**

**JACKIE** is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426343**

**ATTRACTIVE** blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426341**

**EILEEN** mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341**

**CAROLINE,** attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426347**

**SUE,** 38, petite blonde, curvy size 8, outgoing, cultured, enjoys cosy night cuddles, seeking discreet loving male to make me feel special. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426219**

**SARA,** 43, educated independent attractive female, nervous about dating through advertising, so pls don't disappoint me by not replying. I promise I wont disappoint you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426161**

**JANE,** attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No; 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425931**

**CHLOE** pretty single female 36yrs, dark hair/eyes, slim build, very lonely and looking for reliable discreet male for mutual companionship maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426079**

**JANINE** 40yrs, very cute petite artistic female who has a real passion for life, WLTM similarly passionate male for tactile LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426125**

**BROWN** eyed Brummie female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5780679**

**KELLY** young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

**KELLY** young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

**DONNA** naughty 40's, pretty, loves nights in, gym, theatre, seeks someone to make me laugh, give lots of cuddles and go on fun dates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425867**

**DAWN** 33yr old female looking for companionship with understanding, non-jealous male 35-55yrs. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425849**

**KAREN,** 52, 5ft5, short browny/blond hair, green eyes, medium build, GSOH, loving, caring and kind, likes to do lots of things, likes a laugh, WLTM similar gent, hope to hear from you soon! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425917**

**ANETTA,** black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425933**

**AMANDA,** 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117**

**GILLY,** slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425929**

**MERRY** widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425927**

## Single Men

**YOUNG** 60 West Midlands male, 5ft 8ins, grey hair, slim to medium build, sexy Scorpio, GSOH, broadminded, seeking an honest sexy lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426621**

**MALE** N/S, honest, GSOH, car owner, seeks female, 55-70 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416817**

**CARING** male, 63, N/S, GSOH, genuine likes music, travel, meals out, casual drink, seeks female, 50-70 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416997**

**EASYGOING** male, 63, genuine, N/S seeks female 50-70 for friendship and romance. Looks unimportant. Likes occasional drink, eating in/out, cinema and driving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418893**

**SINGLE** male, n/s, likes music, films, driving, nights in, dining out, trips, WLTM lady, 50-70, looks unimportant, for friendship and relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424927**

**GENTLEMAN** wishes to meet nice lady 45-60, West Midlands area. My interests are meals out, daytrips, music and reading. **Text only. Mailbox: 5817771**

**GENUINE** Stoke male 50s, friendly and easygoing, enjoys weekends away, seeks slim attractive female 35 to 50 for friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5817202**

**MARK,** single, 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, lots of interests, sport, music, cinema, long walks, eating out, looking to meet that special lady. If that sounds like you please get in touch! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426461**

**I** enjoy the great outdoors with the dog, 36 years old, mature with a caring nature looking for a female age 28-48 for friendship, possible relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5803493**

**ADVENTUROUS** 36-year-old male, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

**CARING** male, 6ft, blue eyes, slim, dark hair, honest, loving, down to earth, likes sport, music, cinema, meals out, seeking special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409803**

**IAN,** 5ft6, looking for somebody, 18-60, for general good fun times, days out, nights out, meals, sightseeing and visiting various parts of the country. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426437**

**MALE** 45 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, slim, likes sports, cinema, meals out, seeking loving, caring female to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406737**

**YOUNG** 60, West Midlands male, 5ft8, grey hair, wear specs, GSOH, sexy Scorpion, broad minded, slim to medium build, varied interests, seeking a genuine, honest, sexy lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426137**

**40** year old Hungarian male, 5ft8, slim, dark blond hair, blue eyes, WLTM a lady 30-45 to spend some time together for friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5800702**

**WILLIAM,** young 56, would like some adult fun with a sexy lady, any age, wants and good time and discreet fun. **Text only. Mailbox: 5321154**

**MALE,** 60s, 5ft10, slim build, looking to meet female, for a mature adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426053**

**MALE,** 58, works in agriculture, lives in North Shropshire area, likes the countryside, days at the coast even in the winter, meals out, looking for loving, caring, country girl, 50s-60s. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426037**

**SINGLE** male, 31 years old, brown eyes, black hair, 6ft, seeks single slim athletic build lady similar age for fun, hopefully more. **Text only. Mailbox: 4765584**

**JAY,** attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

**CHRISTIAN,** 57, 6ft, dark, likes walking, nice meals and socialising, looking for discreet times with a similar fun lady. If you are interested please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425947**

**STEVE,** 59, sincere and genuine, likes pub meals, country walks and cinema, seeks Chinese, Tia, Black, Asian or Italian lady, looks unimportant but personality is, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425831**

**I** am looking for a lady friend to enjoy my retirement with. I enjoy going out for meals and would like some company. **Text only. Mailbox: 5777872**

**MARRIED** businessman, mid fifties, seeks lady for discreet adult fun. Any age/looks unimportant. **Text only. Mailbox: 5534019**

**MALE,** 60, tall and slim, WLTM older female of larger build, any age, any status, for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425807**

**TALL** male, 58, seeks larger woman, any age, for discreet fun, married or single. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425643**

**CHRISTIAN** male 51, seeking Christian female, 35-45 for friendship, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423747**

**GENUINE** male, 37, friendly and easygoing, enjoys sport and keep fit, WLTM genuine female 25-45, for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420253**

**TALL,** dark, attractive male, 57, WLTM an attractive female for discreet daytime fun, 25-50. Can travel. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425759**

**MALE,** late 60s, medium build, 5ft10, n/s, car owner, likes meals out, holidays, walks, WLTM slim, attractive female who enjoys similar activities for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425757**

**ATTRACTIVE** Shrewsbury male, 50s, WLTM an attractive female, any age/status, for discreet daytime fun and excitement, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422801**

**I'M** Andy, 52, looking for a lady, 50-65, for long term relationship, so text me and lets see what happens. **Text only. Mailbox: 5396692**

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# Ranger Rover Story – a celebration

By Sharon Walters

**Land Rover has opened a new visitor attraction at its thriving Solihull manufacturing plant. 'The Range Rover Story' is an interactive exhibit created to celebrate 50 years of the world's most revered luxury SUV.**

Range Rover has been manufactured at Solihull since 1970, but its history with the site goes back to 1967 when the first secret prototype was conceived, codenamed Velar. The new exhibit will take visitors on a time-travelling voyage from its inception in the mid 1960s, through to the introduction of the Range Rover Sport and Range Rover Evoque.

The exhibition culminates in an exciting unveil of the new Range Rover Velar, celebrating British design and engineering integrity.

Roger Crathorne (known as Mr Land Rover) dedicated 50 years' service to Land Rover and has been heavily involved in the creation of the exhibition. He said: "The exhibit tells the incredible story of the Range Rover, from the original Velar prototype through to today's new model.

"At the time I began my career in 1967 as a technicalassistant on the Velar Team, the intention was never to build a luxury vehicle. Over the 50 years since, the Range Rover has come a long way. We wanted to develop a more comfortable on-road Land Rover that would combine the comfort of the Rover with the Land Rover 4x4 capability to support a growing leisure market."

Nigel Blenkinsop, operations director at Solihull, said: "We are hugely proud to build the Range Rover Velar at Solihull, the birthplace of both the Land Rover and Range Rover. Here, we have invested over £2bn in recent years to enable us to triple production. Our business is now Britain's number one car manufacturer."

The story of Range Rover – 50 years

Story unfolds and reveals what lies under the skin

Mr Land Rover, Roger Crathorne pictured right, dedicated 50 years service to Land Rover

The opening of the Range Rover exhibition coincides with the opening of Velar manufacturing tours at Solihull. Velar is the third new model in a year to be launched at the plant, following the Jaguar F-PACE and new Discovery. Velar is produced in one of the largest aluminium body shops in the world and is beautifully finished in a versatile trim hall; capable of producing three different SUVs – all built to customers' unique specifications.

The Solihull plant has contributed to the company doubling its sales and headcount in the past five years. This has supported the UK's revival in manufacturing, boosting the British economy where the automotive company provides 240,000 jobs in the supply chain.

The Range Rover family contributes £10bn annually to the UK economy and is Britain's largest luxury export.

To book on this tour visit: www.solihull.landroverexperience.co.uk/manufacturing/range-rover-story. A manufacturing tour and off-road experience at Solihull's Land Rover Experience Centre is also available to book in conjunction with the Range Rover Story.

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#Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. General Motors UK Limited t/a Vauxhall Motors reserves the right to change, amend or withdraw this offer at any point in time. Correct at time of going to press.

It looks long and low but with sleek, aerodynamic lines

# All guns blazing for Kia with Optima Sportswagen

By John Griffiths

**Long gone are the days when estate cars were the rather boxy, boring preserve of travelling salesmen.**

Now they have to be as stylish (and in some cases more so) than their saloon stablemates as not only business buyers but families with children or dogs seek the practicality of a big, easy to load luggage area.

Now Kia, with a keen eye on European markets, has joined the fray with what is, surprisingly, its first effort in the fiercely competitive D-segment estate market. There is a big advantage in coming late to the party – you can see what others are doing and do it better.

By coincidence or not, the Optima Sportswagon offers a little more luggage space than big-selling rivals such as the Vauxhall Insignia and Ford Mondeo, and comes exceptionally well kitted out at competitive prices. And, of course, there's that seven year warranty package.

Prices start at £22,295 (£1,100 more than the saloon) up to £30,595 for the flagship GT-Line with automatic transmission. The car tested was the mid-range '3' spec model at £24,495 on the road.

At first sight it looks long and low but with sleek, aerodynamic lines which convery a sporting

**There's a comprehensive instrument panel**

appearances. Appearances can be deceptive, as under the skin the Sportwagon can carry five passengers and 552 litres of luggage – rising to an impressive 1,686 litres with the rear seats folded down. If that's not enough you get roof rails too.

The rear seats split 40:20:40 so you can still carry two adults in the back while making space for longer items of luggage.

It is powered by a 1.7 litre turbo diesel with 139PS of power and a hefty 340Nm of torque at just 1,750rpm. That's enough for a sub ten seconds sprint time to 62mph, but that's not the whole story: the low down pulling power means smooth acceleration and refined cruising, with the engine barely breathing heavily on the motorway.

That's helped by the slick six-speed manual, with a top gear ratio pitched relatively high to aid economy and refinement at higher speeds.

It's official fuel average is 64.2mpg (I managed 51mpg on a series of relatively short A and B road trips) with a low CO2 rating of 113g/km.

Most of my trips were made in pretty awful weather conditions – which made me truly thankful for the sheer luxury of the Sportswagon's heated seats and steering wheel.

The seats in the '3' grade test car were large and comfortable, in a mix of black cloth and faux leather.

The driver has a comprehensive instrument panel in front of him, with the colour touch screen atop the centre console angled slightly towards him or her. It's only a few degrees, but it does make it easier to read and appears to cut reflections.

The screen displays the satnav, but also controls the smartphone connectively, Apple CarPlay, Bluetooth, DAB radio and audio and connected services such as traffic, speed camera and weather updates, Your music choice is played through a Harmen Kardon premium sound system.

Climate control, electric windows, cornering lights, electrically adjustable driver's seat and an automatic de-fogging systems are also standard.

The Kia's safety systems are comprehensive, starting with multiple airbags and including an array of the latest electronic systems including stability control and brake assist, hill start assist, blind spot detection, lane keeping assist, and rear crossing traffic alert.

The car was designed for Europe's roads and the preferences of European drivers, to give it a dynamic and slightly sporting character. The steering is quick and accurate which contributes to the agility of what is, after all, a fairly long car,

The Sportswagon has an upmarket feel, and the driving seat is a good place to be. The fixtures and fittings have a premium feel, and at under £25,000 the test model seemed a lot of car for your money.


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The Paul Hunter Foundation team overcame Pennfields D in the Consolation Cup final

Plate competition runner up Chris Ward picking up silverware from Evans

Plate winner Dan Ward with league chairman Derek Evans

Secretaries handicap winner Mark Gilbert (Sedgley WMC) with trophy

# Serial winner Dan wards off rival to make history

**DANIEL WARD has become the most decorated player in the history of the Staffs and West Midlands Snooker League.**

The Sedgley Ex-Service potter added another piece of silverware to his sizeable haul by claiming the Plate Competition.

Ward rolled in breaks of 46 and 44 on his way to a 3-1 success against Chris Ward (Stafford Institute).

It was his first Plate success having previously won the Individual Championship, Individual Handicap, Junior Championship, Pairs Medley, Foursomes, 3x2 Handicap and the Division One title.

Mark Gilbert (Sedgley WMC) also had cause for celebration after lifting the Secretaries Handicap title.

Gilbert, the league's general secretary, beat Neil Beckley (Hotshots) by a comfortable aggregate score of 189-105 despite a 48 break from Beckley.

There was a team triumph for The Paul Hunter Foundation in the Consolation Cup final.

The Division Four side overcame Division Six outfit Pennfields D 546-512 to claim the trophy for the second time having won it in 2015.

## Resistance

Connor Showell, Nathan Edwards, Jodie Humphries and Tom Hurst all won for the Foundation with Bill Bird the only Pennfields player to offer any resistance.

Hotshots are in pole position to win the race for Division One glory.

The championship battle turned in Hotshots' favour after they beat Stafford Institute A4-1 away from home while title rivals Sedgley Ex-Service and Brandhall Labour both lost.

Callum Downing (40), Roy Stokes, Milan Krstanovic and Jamie Brown secured the win for Hotshots which took them a step nearer to their first title.

Sedgley Ex-Service A saw their challenge go up in smoke when they were crushed 5-0 by Shifnal A.

Matt Davies rolled in a fine break of 95 for the Shropshire side with Chris Jones, Shaun Harris (47), Ian Duffy and Paul Lloyd (59) also winning.

Reigning champions Brandhall Labour A's hopes of landing a sixth straight title took a huge hit when they went down to a shock 3-2 reverse at home to Cannock Cons A. Riley Parsons, Mick Faulkner (50) and Dave Coborn were on target for Cons.

Karl Ashmore (79) and Alan Hooper responded for Labour, who are now three points behind Hotshots.

Division Two leaders Willenhall Liberal B maintained their two-point lead going into the final week of the season with a 5-0 win against Pennfields B. Scott Tapper (38), Simon Gough, Lee Bannister, Andy Price and Lee Thomson secured the whitewash.

Second-placed Sedgley WMC B who also whitewashed their opponents Bilston BC A 5-0 thanks to Steve Spicer, Mo Rucsaal (38), Shaf Hussain, Stuart Barker and Mark Gilbert.

Wolverhampton Electric A have already secured the Division Three titles but there are no fewer than six clubs still in with a chance of securing one of the two remaining promotion places.

Wednesfield RBL A are now in second place after a hard-fought 3-2 away victory at struggling Fordhouses CC A.

Amery made it three titles on the spin as they clinched the Division Four crown despite losing 3-2 to promotion hopefuls Bushbury Grid A.

Essington WMC A confirmed their instant return to Division Three with a 4-1 win at Forty Four Club C. Division Five leaders Pennfields C sealed promotion but will have to wait another week to clinch the title after they suffered a heavy 4-1 home defeat to promotion contenders Bushbury Grid B.

Bushbury Grid C saw their lead at the top of Division Six cut to one point despite defeating promotion candidates Forty Four Club B.

Liam Boucher, Darren Shirley and Paul Wakeman, in the decider, saw Bushbury home after Andrew Crowther and Sean Rowley had put Forty Four 2-0 up.

Results – Division 1: Brandhall Lab A 2 Cannock Cons A 3; Pennfields A 4 Lea Hall 1; Sedgley WMC A 4 Baggeridge Soc 1; Shifnal WM A 5 Sedgley Ex Service A 0; Stafford Inst A 1 Hotshots SC 4; Wednesfield Cons A 3 Brandhall Lab B 2; Woodfield Soc A 3 Landywood SC A 2.

Division 2: Bilston BC A 0 Sedgley WMC B 5; Golden Cue B 1 Golden Cue A 4; Golden Cue D 2 Shifnal WM B 3; Goodyear A 2 Sedgley WMC C 3; Landywood SC B 4 Woodfield Soc B 1; Smethwick Lab 2 Kingswinford SC 3; Golden Cue C 2 Stafford Inst B 3; Willenhall Lib B 5 Pennfields B 0.

Division 3: Bilston S & S A 2 Wednesfield Cons C 3; British Rail A 1 Wednesfield Cons B 4; Cannock Cons B 2 Goodyear B 3; Fordhouses CC A 2 Wednesfield RBL A 3; Sedgley Ex Service B 2 Bilston BC B 3; Willenhall Lib A 3 Woodfield Soc C 2; W'ton Electric A 4 W'ton Electric B 1; Sedgley Ex Service C 3 Landywood SC D 2.

Division 4: Blymhill 3 Sedgley Ex Service D 2; Bushbury Grid A 3 Amery 2; Coseley Ex Service 4 Bilston S & S B 1; Shepwell Green A 1 British Rail B 4; Codsall Firs B 4 Codsall Firs A 1; Forty Four Club C 1 Essington WMC A 4; Golden Cue F 2 Stafford Cons 3; W'ton Electric C 1 P.Hunter Foundation (Cue E) 4.

Division 5: Codsall Firs C 1 Golden Cue J 4; Essington WMC B 3 Woodfield Soc E 2; Woodfield Soc D 3 Bentley Moor 2; Golden Cue H 3 W'ton Electric D 2; JD's SC 3 Darlaston Cons A 2; Landywood SC C 3 Triangle SC 2; Pennfields C 1 Bushbury Grid B 4; Sedgley WMC D 3 Golden Cue G 2.

Division 6: Darlaston Cons B 3 RAFA B 2; Forty Four Club B 2 Bushbury Grid C 3; The Royal 1 Fordhouses CC B 4; Wednesfield RBL B 3 Fordhouses CC C 2; Essington WMC C 2 Pennfields D 3; Fordhouses CC D 0 Bilston S & S C 5; Wednesfield Cons D 2 British Rail C 3; Woodfield Soc F 1 Golden Cue K 4.

Consolation Cup: Pennfields D 512 P.Hunter Foundation (Cue E) 546 (Handicaps - Pennfields D 287, P Hunter Foundation (Cue E) 231).

Individual Plate: Daniel Ward 3 Chris Ward 1.

Secretaries Handicap: N Beckley 105 Mark Gilbert 189 (Handicaps - Beckley 7, Gilbert 21).

## SPORTING MEMORIES

By Nick Elwell

***Another piece of silverware is added to Mark's sizeable haul by claiming the Plate Competition***

# It's full speed ahead as Shelley excels

THERE was plenty for racing fans to get excited about away from the British Superbikes over the weekend as the Darley Moor Club Championship season got under way.

Burtwood's Lloyd Shelley recorded a perfect four wins from four starts, with three fastest laps, to get his title defences off to the perfect start.

But the victories did come easy as, despite leading across the line after each of the six laps during the opening Formula 600 race, rival Steven Proctor was no more than half a second behind throughout.

The Staffordshire star, however, enjoyed an easier time in both Sound of Thunder races – another title he is defending – taking victories from Jamie Medhurst by 11 and eight seconds respectively.

Stuart Hall, from Rugeley, fared well in the Mini Sound of Thunder class – which is raced alongside the Sound of Thunder bikes – taking the runner-up spot in each race, finishing an impressive eighth and ninth overall.

Dudley's Mark Cockerton sits second in the Classic 350 series table after the opening round, while Willenhall's McAuley Longmore is third in the Formula 125 class.

# Reece races into top spot in new duathlon

BLACK Country Triathletes made the most of the good weather as the season got well under way. One of BCT's junior athletes, Reece Ashfield aged 17, competed against adults in a new Formula 5 Duathlon at the National Bowl, Milton Keynes. He came home in first place overall in a time of 47:40.

Athletes took podium places in several age categories in races in Hereford and Halewowen. Rob Kennard & Scott Palmer raced in the Hereford Duathlon, Kennard finishing 21st overall and 2nd in the age group 50 category in the standard distance and Palmer finishing fifth and first in his age group (male senior) in the sprint distance.

A number of BCT athletes competed in one of the first triathlons of the year at Halesowen Sprint Tri consisting of a 400m swim, 20km bike and a 5km run. Nick Blackman was first home for the club finishing sixth overall and fourth in the Vet 40 category in a time of 1:15:20.

The only female racing for the club was Stacey Skitt who had a fantastic come back race finishing in 1:23:27 placing her second female overall and first senior female. Chris Pedley and Gary Hickman brought home first and second in the male Vet 60 age group. In the senior male age group Thomas Dauncey finished 12th overall.

# FA group's goal is to help out hospice

THE Staffordshire FA has announced a charity of the year partnership with The Donna Louise Children's Hospice.

Throughout the next year, the FA group will be working with the hospice to raise funds and awareness of the services offered to children and young adults.

The Donna Louise provides a wide range of vital services for children and young adults with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, and their families.

Each year the charity must raise at least £3 million, most of which comes from fundraising and donations, to continue to offer its services.

Adam Evans, chief executive officer of the charity, based in Stoke-on-Trent, said, "We are delighted that The Staffordshire FA has been able to secure a charity partnership with The Donna Louise.

A spokesman for Staffordshire FA said: "It is fantastic that we are in a position to provide support and exposure to the hospice and highlight the amazing service that they provide for families throughout Staffordshire and the surrounding area."

# Sport

Dan's the man to make snooker history
Page 47

## Maximum Blackburn's riding high

JACK Parkinson-Blackburn wrapped up his first ever full maximum as Birmingham beat King's Lynn 54-36 in Norfolk.

The 16-year-old won all six of his outings as the Surestop Brummies began their National League title defence in ultimate style.

After securing four heat advantages in the opening five races, the Brummies led by 14 points and never looked back.

While the full team chipped in, it was Parkinson-Blackburn who stole the show with a faultless display.

He said: "I'm so happy to finally get my first full max and it couldn't have been timed much better! The last few days have been so frustrating and a little bit disheartening to be honest because I wrote one bike off and severely damaged my other at the weekend.

"I've got a busy week ahead of me and that's why I pulled out of Tuesday's British Under-21 Semi-Final.

"I was absolutely gutted to have to do that because that was one of my goals for the season – to go there and finish in the top three there."

While Parkinson-Blackburn was untouchable at The Adrian Flux Arena, Layne Cupitt was in fabulous form once again scoring double figures against his former team.

Meanwhile, Danyon Hume was only denied a full max himself when he blew an engine whilst leading heat six.

Tom Bacon got his night up and running with two race victories, but endured a frustrating ending to his evening after being excluded by referee Mick Bates.

As well as sliding off in his penultimate outing Darryl Ritchings ended his night on a high with a race win while Macauley Leek looked a lot more competitive and was rewarded with a decent set of points.

## Brummies dealt a blow as Hay bows out of speedway

BIRMINGHAM speedway have been dealt a blow after Chris Hay informed the club that he is quitting the sport.

The 28-year-old completed just one meeting for the Surestop Brummies before picking up a wrist injury in an individual meeting at Stoke.

But prior to Friday's postponed National League clash with King's Lynn, the North Yorkshire racer officially stood down from his place in the side due to personal reasons.

Boss Graham Drury said: "I'm more than very disappointed because it's left us in a bit of a predicament now.

"Chris showed a lot of enthusiasm to join us over the winter so for him to quit after just one meeting for us was a total shock.

"That's another rider we've got to look to replace now and at this stage of the season, options really are limited."

The Brummies host Plymouth at Perry Barr on Wednesday – and supporters, both old and new, can get in for a reduced price. Fans who text their name and postal address to 07818033766 will receive a special £10 offer ticket.

## Brothers hope to Stokes up their fire

BOXING

BLACK Country boxing brothers Tom and Josh Stokes will appear on the same pro boxing bill for the first time in May in what they hope will be the start of a long and successful road that leads to major titles.

The siblings appear on BCB Promotions' 'Next Step' show at the Holiday Inn Birmingham City Centre on Friday, May 12, with hopes of one day emulating the Smiths – British Boxing's most decorated brothers. Paul, Stephen, Liam and Callum Smith have all achieved, at least, British Title honours and the Stokes brothers would like nothing more than to follow in their footsteps.

Tom said: "There's a bit of sibling rivalry but, ultimately, we just want each other to succeed." Tom, despite being the younger of the two brothers at 22, has enjoyed more time in the ring than elder brother Josh (23). Tom (8-0) picked up a British Challenge Middleweight Title last time out and has set his sights on the vacant Midlands Area strap. Josh (1-0), who made his pro debut last month, is equally excited about the prospect.

"It's something we have talked about so it's nice to get the chance to box on the same show so early in our careers," he added. Tom takes on Essex's Paul Hilz (3-2) over eight rounds whilst Josh is yet to be matched.

Tom and Josh, who are sponsored by Alliance Scaffolding in Oldbury, are joined on The Next Step by Willenhall-based female professional boxer, Lauren Johnson (1-0), who enjoyed a perfect pro debut in Walsall last month.

There is also an intriguing super featherweight clash to complete the card as unbeaten Burton prospect, Leon Gower (3-0), steps in with West Bromwich's Jack Summers (3-1), who is fresh from an away victory over Tamworth's Louis Fielding at the weekend.

# BAGGIES' BAD RUN GOES ON

**AS sure as eggs are eggs, we'll go on a bad run.**

Those were Tony Pulis's words at the the height of Albion's powers, when they were unstoppable at home, and dreaming of European qualification.

Supporters often criticise him for lacking ambition, both on the pitch and in his press conferences, but they are the words of an experienced pragmatist, a man with 25 years of managerial experience.

This is that bad run. The Baggies have now lost five of their last seven and far more worryingly, failed to score in six of those outings.

Amazingly, they are still in eighth place, but breaking the club's record Premier League points tally is looking increasingly unlikely.

None of the five games left look appealing. There are home matches against a resurgent Leicester side and champions-elect Chelsea coming with trips to home specialists Burnley, Manchester City, and relegation-threatened Swansea.

### Focused

Salomon Rondon has now gone four months without netting, so it was unsurprising Hal Robson-Kanu was preferred up front.

The Wales international works his socks off, but his tame shot straight at Simon Mignolet after a well-taken chest down suggests he lacks the quality needed in front of goal.

When you only have two strikers you're over-reliant on the rest of the team to chip in.

All the build-up to the match focused on Albion's threat from set-pieces and Liverpool's frailty at them.

So perhaps it was inevitable that two visiting players under six foot would combine in the air to score the only goal.

Beforehand, Pulis warned that Liverpool were also dangerous in the air, but he probably wouldn't have expected 5ft 10in Lucas and 5ft 11in Roberto Firmino to be the ones doing the damage. It was a clever flick on, but Albion were sleeping at the back post, where everyone failed to react in time to Firmino's run.

The goal was doubly punishing because, not only did it come on the stroke of half-time, but the Baggies had matched Jurgen Klopp's men for the first half. As well as Robson-Kanu's chance, Firmino had to get an important touch on Matt Phillips' cross to take the ball off Chadli's foot at the back post.

Chris Brunt and Matt Phillips are left disconsolate after Albion suffer their fifth loss in seven matches

The reaction after half-time was the most disappointing thing. For the first time this season Pulis questioned his players, saying some of them weren't playing for the team, although he did praise them for their response during the last 20 minutes. One man who looked woefully out of sorts was Darren Fletcher.

Perhaps the long season is catching up with him, but Albion's skipper looked like his mind was elsewhere for much of the game and was caught in possession far too much.

This group of players has been brilliant this season, but it's now time for Pulis to rest a few weary legs and give youth a chance.

Sam Field is a talented young midfielder very much in Fletcher's mould who will benefit from a few starts, and even though Jonathan Leko gave away a goal last time out, his trickery on the wing may help in the final third.

Not only that, but it would give the supporters something to cheer on in these remaining few matches, because this season is in serious danger of fizzling out and all the good work done is in danger of being lost. Finish lower than 50 points, and outside the top 10, and the critics who argue Pulis will never take the club any further will only grow louder.

## Davies kicks off on road to pugilism

TIVIDALE'S Ryan Davies plans to remain a welter belter as he makes the transition from kickboxer to paid pugilist at the weight. The 24-year-old is preparing to become a pro with a four-round bow against Matthew Ashmole in Birmingham later this month.

He features on Errol Johnson's BCB Promotions bill at the Icknield Road fight scene, in the Edgbaston area of the second city. The show, on Friday, April 28, has been titled 'Heavy Artillery.'

Davies comes into the code under the tutelage of another former kickboxer, Tyler Shakespeare, who has also brought Kyle Williams across the sports.

'Rhino' Davies is like a bull at a gate waiting to get started and, like Williams, will keep his hand in kickboxing as an instructor, for him at the School of Black Belts in Oldbury. He seized an ISKA world crown in his former calling and has set his sights on big belts again in boxing, with the British title his target.

Welshman Ashmole, 36, is a regular on the circuit and has racked up 34 pro bouts, only failing to see the final bell on five occasions. He said: "It's a new challenge, but guts is my game and I want that title. I live the gym and I'm always on it, getting as fit as I can be."

The main event of 'Heavy Artillery' will see Wolverhampton's Josh Burke and Coventry's Dilly Singh contest the vacant British Challenge cruiserweight title over eight rounds. Brummies Luke Heron, Ijaz Ahmed and Aaron Murphy won't have far to travel to take their places on the show. Heron and Ahmed are middleweights, while cruiser Murphy makes his pro debut.

Leamington's Michael Cole features at super lightweight, with Old Hill's Manny Zaber a second Black Country presence completing the line-up at super feather.

## Redknapp quickly moves in at Blues

HARRY Redknapp's takeover at the Birmingham City helm came within hours of Gianfranco Zola falling on his sword, with three games of the season left.

"I sacked myself," said Zola, who oversaw just two wins in 22 league games, seeing the Blues plummet to within three points of the Championship relegation zone.

Zola took full responsibility for Monday's 2-0 home loss to Burton.

Goals in either half from Lloyd Dyer and Lucas Akins sealed a double for the Brewers over the Blues, with home fans chanting 'we want Zola out' towards the end of the match.

★★★

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